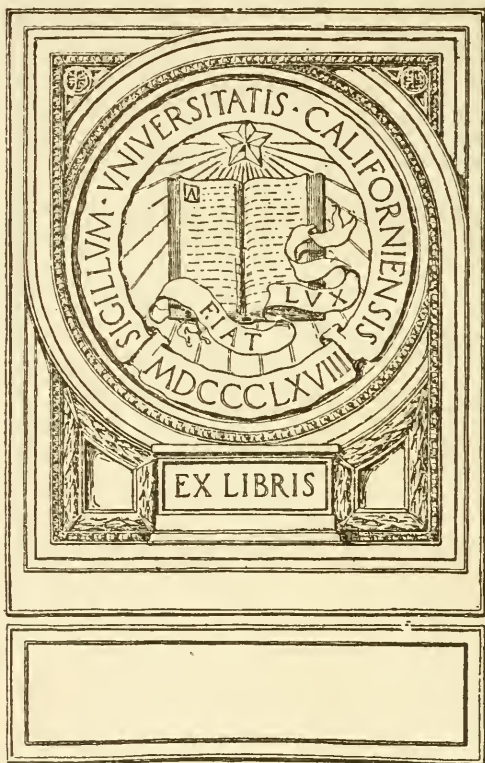


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FLIRTATION.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
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FLIRTATION.

A NOVEL.

"Are not they in the actual practice of Guilt, who care not whether they are thought Guilty or not?"—*Spectator*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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FLIRTATION.

CHAPTER I.

“ It seems to be true, that no plenitude of present gratifications can make the possessor happy for a continuance, unless he have something in reserve—something to hope for and look forward to. This I conclude to be the case, from comparing the alacrity and spirits of men who are engaged in any pursuit which interests them, with the dejection and ennui of almost all who are either born to so much that they want nothing more, or who have used up their satisfactions too soon, and drained the sources of them.”

PALFY.

“ So, the old boy is off at last !” said lounging Lepel to Lord Mowbray, as he entered the room. “ I give you joy, Mowbray, with all my heart :” (had he any ?) “ I thought that the

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unconscionable fellow had taken an everlasting lease of life, and never would have the grace to part with it! Well, and so now you have nothing to do but to make the contents of his coffers fly; and enjoy yourself with all your friends: an enviable situation, truly! Nothing but amusement, and with your own set; delightful! Well, my dear Lord, always remember there is not one among the number more truly attached to you than myself."

"Friends" and "attached"—these two words were curiously conned over by Lord Mowbray, who, besides feeling the terms in which Captain Lepel so flippantly spoke of his deceased relative, to be repugnant to him, was a nice appreciator of real elegance, and contemned the fashionable slang, which confounds the true meaning of language, and is the refuge of inferiority to hide its emptiness; added to which, Lord Mowbray could not coolly speculate on worldly advantages, whilst the memory of one connected, though distantly, with him by ties of consanguinity, and with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy and reciprocal kindness, was

still fresh in his bosom. Restraining, however, all expression of his feelings, after a considerable pause, he rejoined—"No—very true, I have nothing to do—nothing, absolutely, except to amuse myself; neither have I ever had: but, then, how shall I do that?" and he sighed as he took up a newspaper which lay on the table, and run his eye carelessly over the page.

"Ah! what," rejoined Captain Lepel, "always singular? Nobody like you at saying an odd thing. Very excellent, 'faith! I will sport it at Brookes's. A man with twenty thousand a year, young too, and of rank, not know how to amuse himself! Capital, upon my honour! 'How shall I do that?' Ha! ha! ha! Well, perhaps it might afford you some diversion, or at least put you in the way to find some, to go to the rehearsal at the Opera this morning. I have always the *entrée* at the rehearsals; there will be *Così Fan Tutte*, a delicious opera, in which the new *Prima Donna*, Rosalinda Lorenzi, makes her *debut*."

“Rosalinda!” echoed Lord Mowbray; “what Rosalinda?”

“Why *the* Rosalinda, to be sure; have you not heard of her? have *you* been in Italy so long and not heard *the* Rosalinda?”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Lord Mowbray.

“Why impossible, my dear Lord? Depend upon it, it is so; come, and you’ll see. But, by the way, have you looked at the famous Arabian ponies which have been brought over for his Majesty? They are not publicly shown, but I can take you to the stables; I am sure, that any friend of mine may see them at any time. I take care never to be without a friend at court. Ha! ha! ha! Will you go, my Lord?”

“To the rehearsal, or to the stables, which do you mean? Either will do for me—yes—no—stay. Yes; I think I may as well walk towards the stables as any other way.”

This matter arranged, Lepel passed his arm familiarly through Lord Mowbray’s; and having conducted the latter to a noted fruit-shop by the way, ate peaches when they were at the price of gold; and then, feeling in his pocket,

carelessly observed that he had forgotten his purse—“but never mind,” turning to the shop-woman, “put it down to *my* account: you know *me*, Mrs. Florimel, I am always an exact man; put it to *my account*.” That meant to any other person’s except his own, whom he might chance to persuade to become her customer: the way that the bills of many an honourable gentleman and lady are paid; and, as it answered Mrs. Florimel’s purpose precisely as well, no observations were ever made, and the tacit understanding was duly preserved and acted upon.

“Oh! dear Sir,” she replied, smilingly,—“don’t mention payment; certainly, Sir, I am always happy to serve you any time; much obliged for all favours; won’t my Lord take another peach? always happy to have the honour of serving any of your friends, Sir. As often as you pass this way, pray look in; shall have some choice grapes next week.”

Having managed this little difficulty after a fashion usual with Captain Lepel, (and in which, as in similar manœuvring, practice had made him perfect,) he was proceeding to conduct

Lord Mowbray to the King's stables, when, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he pulled out his watch, and observed—"If we go there now, we may be perhaps too late for the rehearsal." And perhaps, too, he apprehended his interest in that quarter would prove less powerful than he had vaunted it to be, and therefore dexterously avoided a discovery, by turning his companion's footsteps towards the Opera House.

"Now, you will be enchanted, my dear Lord! Never was any thing altogether like the Rosalinda, nor ever will be again; she has two notes in her voice beyond any voice that was ever heard before."

Lord Mowbray instinctively put his hands on his ears—"I hate screaming."

"Ha, ha, ha; you are just the same, I see; just the same queer, eccentric fellow!—but I was giving you an account of Rosalinda." Lord Mowbray sighed, and stared at Captain Lepel. "She is wondrous handsome, my Lord, I do assure you; even your fastidious

taste would acknowledge this. Her hair quite black, her skin of the most delicate texture, as white as snow,—that is to say, a sort of rich cream-coloured skin, that looks like marble; such a carriage! and then sings like forty thousand angels.”

“That is too many at once to please me: too many to be agreeable, I should conceive, to any one,” interrupted Lord Mowbray.

“Pshaw, my Lord, it is impossible to tell you any thing. You always make a joke.”

“Why there are some persons, indeed, whose conversation one must always either seriously contradict, or laugh at; and upon the whole I prefer doing the latter, Lepel, and concluded my friends must do so likewise.”

“Very true, very true; ha, ha, ha! I had always rather laugh for one, I never saw any use in contradiction, not I: quite of your Lordship’s opinion, upon my honour!”

“Strange,” said Lord Mowbray vacantly; “very, very unaccountable!” And then suddenly stopping, he added: “I must bid you good

morning, for I recollect I have an engagement in Brook-street. They are all waiting for me to give some orders about the funeral."

"Who is waiting for you? what, all? nonsense! Why do you go into that melancholy hole? Stay till they have cleared it of its black velvet and its escutcheons, and purified it from the undertakers. I hate going to such scenes; why it only serves to give a man the blue devils."

"It is not the gayest thing in the world, to be sure; but I promised old Davies, and will not disappoint him."

"Old Davies! why you do not mind your promise to him? As if they could not screw up my Lord just as well without your orders."

This was too coarse. Lord Mowbray was disgusted, and showed that he was so. Lepel quickly rejoined—"Oh! you need not look grave. You know I always liked the old gentleman. He was the best bred man I ever was in company with,—understood horses better than any body,—kept an excellent table, the

best quality (talking of qualities) that any body *can* have, and includes every other that ensures a man many friends. I was only in joke—wouldn't for the world say any thing to offend your good heart, which I value too highly to wound for a moment. Meant nothing at all, I assure you ;—nobody I esteemed more than the late Lord Mowbray—except the present :—the present company, you know, are always excepted.”

“ You are very obliging,” replied the latter, dryly ; “ I wish you a good morning :” and bowing, he walked away, leaving Captain Lepel to study his part more thoroughly for another opportunity.

When Lord Mowbray knocked at the door in Brook-street, his languid step and serious brow afforded a melancholy satisfaction to the faithful old servant who ushered the young heir into the house of mourning. After some preliminary discourse, he ventured to hope that his Lordship meant to attend his noble relative's remains, in person, to their place of interment.

Lord Mowbray's heart was good : it is difficult for a very youthful heart to be otherwise. He laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, that shoulder which in his infancy had so often borne him to his sports, and with an affectionate feeling of respect and sympathy he said, "Certainly, Davies, certainly : I always intended to do so."

"Thank God !" said Davies, and he wept for joy now, as he had lately done for sorrow—joy to see what he considered so fair a promise of good qualities in the successor of his late master. Lord Mowbray felt all this—and thought "Would that I were indeed every thing this good man gives me the credit of being ! But if I am otherwise, is it my fault ? can I help it ? who can help being what they are, whatever that may be ?" The still small voice which replied to his questions he heard not, because he refused to hear ; and passing on through a suite of apartments, one more sumptuous than another, he looked around with a vacant gaze, and throwing himself into a large, tapestried chair, said, "So all this is mine !"

then relapsing into an indefinite reverie, he remained the sport of many visions which floated upon his fancy, but left no distinct impression on his mind.

From this state he was aroused by the entrance of Colonel Pennington, the oldest friend of his late relative, and the friend of his own very early years. After briefly stating to him the orders he had given to the household, in accordance with the last desire of his kinsman, it was finally arranged that they should set out together on the following day for Dorsetshire, and be in readiness at Mowbray Castle, to attend the remains of their departed friend to the burial-place of his ancestors.

There is no situation in which a person can be placed, which is perhaps more favourable to tranquil thought than the corner of a carriage travelling over roads where no very striking objects attract the attention; but where at the same time a smiling, well-cultivated country puts the mind in good humour with itself; unless, indeed, that mind be very hard to please, or is affected by some violent passion; neither of which was exactly

the case with Lord Mowbray, who had leisure, therefore, while Colonel Pennington, lulled in complete forgetfulness, was asleep by his side, to indulge in calm reflection, and to take a survey of his present situation, together with the pains and penalties attached to its greatness: for of the former there was, and ever will be, some alloy mingled with the sweets of the latter.

While his mind retraced the events which had befallen him, he felt the responsibility which now attached to his station, and he thought more deeply and seriously than he had ever done before; yet he asked himself, “Would I resign my station to forego the pleasure with the pain?—I would not. No monarch that ever abdicated the throne but repented him of the deed: even the tradesman who quits his calling to enjoy at ease the fruits of his long and laborious toil, pines for the stimulus of its progressive increase, and misses his daily task; and the individual who abandons the station assigned him by birth or circumstances, would feel the same degrading convic-

tion, the same vacancy. Why do I, therefore, torment myself with speculations on what is, and must be, my destiny?—Those dried leaves that I see rolling about, now taken up in eddies by the wind, and floating in mazy circles in mid air—now scattered far and wide to mingle with the dust, are doubtless made to fulfil *their* destiny; and I shall, I conclude, fill mine, just like them, just like every body and every thing else, without knowing why or wherefore.” Lord Mowbray forgot he was endowed with other faculties than the leaf of the desert, or the breath of the blast.

As the carriage passed through the little hamlet of Abbotsbury, composed chiefly of fishermen’s huts, many of its hardy inhabitants, with their wives and families, prompted by curiosity, thronged the highway to catch a glimpse of the new lord of the Castle, and to indulge in conjecture whether they should be the better for his presence. No advantages certainly had accrued to them, or the surrounding district, from his immediate predecessor, who, whether from dislike to the residence, or from

indolence, had never lived among them; and had scarcely even visited this property, though derived from an ancient line of noble ancestry, and justly therefore entitled to his care. The consequences of such an absence, and the apparent neglect attached to it, had long been felt, and at length became visible in an almost hereditary dislike to the very name of Mowbray; so that the present successor to its wealth and honours found himself at the same time doomed, however innocently, to inherit a proportion of the odium thus unfortunately incurred. As the gathering crowd gazed at the equipage on its way to the humble inn, this feeling evinced itself in a thousand little incidents—and Lord Mowbray, descending from the carriage, walked forward whilst the horses were refreshed.

At a cottage on the skirts of the hamlet, he perceived an elderly woman standing on the threshold, who called loudly to a man that followed close behind Lord Mowbray.

“I say, Jem, hast seen um?—I wonder what thou’st been at the pains to come so far for. This new one will be just as bad as the old,

I doubt not. You know, the new leases are to be set, and he's only cum'd to see what he can get. I would not stir a step to look on him, not I; for all the good we have ever got from t'other is his dead bones, that are brought home to be buried in the family vault to-morrow."

"One may hear something worth hearing," said Lord Mowbray to himself, "even where one least expects it."

At that moment, the outriders and the carriage came up—it stopped—the step was let down. Its splendour and that of the servants dazzled the eyes of the old cottager. She dropped many obsequious curtseys; and, as Lord Mowbray returned her civility with a low bow, she stood rooted to the spot with amazement, and something too of terror, at the idea that the new Lord, as she called him, of the Castle had overheard her conversation.

At a very short distance, Mowbray Castle became visible, standing finely upon a bold and projecting rock which jutted into the sea; its situation being rendered still more magnificent and

commanding from the flatness of the surrounding ground. It had been a place of strength in the days of the Eighth Harry, whose prudence caused the coast towards France to be guarded with many a fortress of similar description; and it had continued so till the jealousy of the Puritans, during the Civil Wars, had led to the dismantling of every strong hold wrested from the Cavaliers, lest the fortune of war might again place them in the hands of their former owners. Nothing now remained, therefore, of the original warlike greatness of Mowbray Castle, save a few vestiges, which were only to be traced by the antiquary; but, as a castellated building, it had an imposing air, and, standing forth in fearless defiance of the raging element of waters to which it was exposed, it claimed a tribute of admiration from its very loneliness: time too, with its magic hand, had spread over the ruins that vague and indefinite interest which it ever sheds, even over the beauty it destroys; and recollection, therefore, was busy in association. The park attached to the Castle, though it had small

title to the name, was a vast, barren piece of land, with here and there a stunted tree, bent from the blasts of the sea, that made desolation appear more desolate. A few patches of yellow blossomed furze were interspersed among the white rocks that lay scattered over its surface, with a sprinkling of the sea-daisy raising its hardy flower in that short thymy herbage, where the sheep found sweet but scanty pasture. A pretty steep descent led through this barren scene to a piece of marshy flat ground, which at certain times of the tide was completely covered by the sea, and must have cut off all communication with the fortress except by water. The ruins of a draw-bridge, which lay scattered around, told that this circumstance had once been a valuable defence to its inhabitants; but now a little boat, fastened to the stump of some decayed tree, afforded a ready access to every passenger, when, during the high tides, it might not be safe to cross the inlet.

“I do not wonder,” said Lord Mowbray, as the carriage jolted alternately over the huge

stones imbedded in the sand, and then sank half-way up the wheels in water—"I do not wonder that my kinsman did not choose to reside here; nothing short of a wild-duck would voluntarily inhabit these regions."

"I don't know that, my Lord. I am not of your opinion: first, because there is a pleasure in property exceeding most pleasures; secondly, because, even in indolent characters, there is a pride in doing good, when that good can be done easily; and where beneficial power may be most extensively exerted, and its effects most sensibly and immediately acknowledged, this is a pleasure equalled by few others, and is one that is tacitly felt by all. Believe me, it would have been better if the late Lord Mowbray had resided more here."

"Better?" said his companion, in replying to him by a species of interrogation; and then added, after a pause—"Perhaps, it *would* have been better."

No sooner did the carriage begin to ascend the hill on which the Castle stood, than a number of persons, whom they had not per-

and both in voice and appearance excited Lord Mowbray's disgust. His eyes, twisted in every possible direction, looked across a nose of extraordinary length, which, dyed of the deepest red, showed the pale and sallow complexion of his face, by contrast made more hideous; while a perpetual grin seemed to distort his countenance, as he endeavoured to make himself heard in the general confusion of tongues.

"I wish the fellow would not torment me so," said Lord Mowbray; "Who is he?"

This question, asked at random, was quickly answered by a little, square-set man, with a black hanging brow and a deep scar on one cheek, who pushed his head over Lord Mowbray's shoulder! "Oh that, your Lordship, is the Gentle Shepherd, well known in these parts, and in many distant ones. Every body knows Smiling Bill. He 's the man, and please you, my Lord, who has the care of all your honour's cattle; there 's not a sheep-path over the country that he does not know as well as the sheep themselves."

"And, pray," asked Lord Mowbray, per-

ceiving that Smiling Bill had given place to his informant, and willing to protect himself from the former by continuing his inquiries,—“ and, pray, what is *your* post in these parts—who are you ?”

“ Oh ! they calls me, my Lord, the Wandering Sailor ; but my real name is Ben Hardy. I have been here and hereabouts, man and boy, these forty years. I am a lone man, your Lordship ; have no soul of kith or kin to speak a word for me, or to give me a kind look. I have eaten my bread in the sweat of my brow ; I have made my bed where I might ; I have done a job here and a job there, first for one, then for t’ other : nobody ever thanked poor Ben. Now, if your Honour would only take my hard case into your thoughts, I might be made watchman or errand-man, and get an honest livelihood.”

“ Have you not always done so, then ?” questioned Lord Mowbray, looking hard at him, as if he doubted the fact.

“ *Always*, your Honour ? Have I not *always* done so ? Why there ’s a puzzling question,

now. As if I could go back forty years, and remember what I have always done ! Your Honour has not lived so long, I doubt, by some few ; and could *you* remember all the days and every day of your life ? no, to be sure ! A gentleman's memory is not to be ransacked in such a manner as that ; and if not a gentleman's, who knows so much better, why, then, surely not a poor man's, of whom less is expected !”

“ You are an ingenious fellow, at least,” said Lord Mowbray ;—“ I will not forget you.”

“ Thank you, my Lord ; thank your Lordship !” vociferated Ben, as he made his way back into the crowd, shouting another loud welcome in acknowledgment of the success of his suit.

There is no saying where the number of applicants would have stopped, after the gracious reception given to Ben Hardy, had not the steward, turning round as he reached the top of the ascent, perceived the throng striving with each other, and struggling who should be

the first to approach Lord Mowbray. Calling to them with a tremendous voice, and brandishing the staff that he held *ex officio*, in his right hand, he bade them stand off; then moving at the same moment a few steps forward, appeared ready to enforce his orders in a still more peremptory manner.

To those who happen to have witnessed the lashing-off a pack of hounds, when running dead in upon the object of their pursuit, the sudden check produced on the yelping and wrangling crew at Lord Mowbray's heels may perhaps be intelligible. In an instant all was silent, except the grinding of the teeth, and a low muttering, which proceeded from some few of the boldest and most forward of the group, and whose looks showed that they rather respected the presence of their future lord, than the command of the man in authority.

Colonel Pennington took Lord Mowbray's arm, and as they quickened their pace to reach the summit, whispered in his ear, "A sad raggamuffin band!—but I am glad to see, at any rate, that they are under some control."

They now stood upon the greensward that surrounded the Castle on every side save one: on that, the building rose abruptly from the very edge of the rock, and seemed to form a part of it. The head grew dizzy, as the eye, looking on the diminished waves beneath, measured the height of the precipice; and the vessels, spread over the vast expanse of ocean, appeared, as their white sails turned to the sun, like pearls set in an outspread mantle of azure.

Lord Mowbray cast a glance over the precipice, and, stepping hastily back, turned towards the entrance. A low arch led by a few steps into a sort of porch, at the end of which appeared a massive weatherbeaten door opening into a spacious hall, where damp and mildew hung in large patches upon the bare and neglected wall. Here and there remained the rusty fastenings which formerly had held the armour and warlike weapons of the inmates of the Castle; and above, suspended from the beams of the ceiling, tattered and clad with cobwebs, waved the remnants of banners once

proudly borne by Lord Mowbray's ancestry in the field of battle, or planted in defiance on the ramparts of their fortress.

It was impossible that Lord Mowbray should not feel sad at these signs of departed greatness; and if his spirit had been of a turn to pass lightly over the reflections which they suggested, the very gloom of the place would have inspired him with melancholy. A wide and ample staircase, of the stone found in the neighbouring Isle of Portland, ascended from the middle of the hall, and branching off right and left, terminated in a length of gallery communicating with the different apartments above. The broad and massive railing, on each side the steps, was ornamented with fretwork of *quatre feuil*; and at intervals were placed escutcheons, sculptured with the bearings of different families allied to the Mowbrays. As his eye rested on these frail emblems of pride, and saw the distinctions, thus vainly endeavoured to be preserved, mutilated and crumbling into dust, Lord Mowbray sighed, and

the occasion of his visit was recalled forcibly to his mind.

“Let a few years pass,” he said inwardly, “and some one will be here to fulfil the same duty to my remains: what then avail all this parade, and these distinctions of earthly grandeur?”

Many of the rooms, as they advanced, appeared going fast to total decay; the wind whistled from between the shutters, which, shrunk and rotten, no longer fitted the apertures; and some, suspended by one hinge only, left uncontrolled entrance to the storms of heaven. The torn arras, the remnants of rich brocade, hanging in shreds upon the walls; the empty picture-frames, robbed of the animated forms that once had spoken in mute intelligence to the spectator; the broken articles of massive furniture piled up in the fireplace, or standing tottering and leaning against the walls; the squalid state of the floors and ceilings; the birds' nests, built in the angles and recesses of the cornices and mouldings: all

showed the approaching ruin of this once proud structure, and the evident neglect which had allowed destruction to make such inroads upon it.

The steward hastened Lord Mowbray forward as quickly as he dared, and urged his reaching the eastern apartments, which had been prepared for his reception, and were by far the best preserved in the building.

“Better, I hope, at any rate, than those we have passed,” said Colonel Pennington, “or, by my faith! we are likely to be badly off in this Castle of yours, my Lord.”

As they entered the room, it offered an appearance of comparative comfort, after what they had witnessed. Some decorations painted on the walls were still perfect, and maintained their colouring: the furniture, of antique form, seemed to bid defiance to the hand of time; and the black oak table, planted in the middle of the apartment and screwed to the floor, looked as if it could fall only with the Castle walls. The upper part of the window was decorated with some very richly painted glass, which here

and there cast an increased lustre on the colours of the walls; while its own brilliancy was contrasted with the coarse, blue-knotted panes that had, from time to time, supplied deficiencies in the original casements.

The steward, having ushered Lord Mowbray into this and the adjoining apartments, withdrew to attend the wants of his domestics; and his Lordship and Colonel Pennington had an opportunity of commenting on the strange reception, and altogether curious class of dependents, who appeared in possession of his late kinsman's property.

“We shall know more about the matter,” said Lord Mowbray, “when I have seen the agent of the estate in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, the person who commands here seems active and obliging, and he cannot help the ruined state of things, I suppose.”

“I feel certain,” replied Colonel Pennington, “that these apartments are usually the residence of the gentleman who has just left us, or they would not be as comfortable as they are: and see here,” as he fixed his eye on a telescope

that was hanging against the wall, "it appears he fills up his idle hours with counting the vessels at sea. Very pretty pastime: I give him credit for his taste; I should do the same myself if I lived here:" and so saying he took down the glass, and proceeded to examine it. "A very fine glass, upon my honour, my Lord," added Colonel Pennington, as he looked through it; "I can almost tell the colours of that little brig that you can scarcely see with the naked eye. What a constant source of amusement, picking up all the vessels that go by! This window commands the whole of Portland Reach, my Lord; and, seated at a little distance, you may fancy yourself on board a man of war. What an inexhaustible source of interest!"

"Heaven forbid!" said Lord Mowbray, "that I should be doomed to such an entertainment. It puts me in mind of all the horrors of being at sea; and hearing some one tell me, 'that is the coast of Spain—that is the island of Minorca—there is such and such a promontory;' when at best they only look like little black streaks in the horizon. It is just the

same to see ships through a glass, passing and repassing on their trackless way. It conveys no feeling to me but that of profound melancholy."

"You have never been long enough at sea, my Lord, to try it fairly."

"I never shall, I hope, my dear Colonel. Come, lay aside your glass and walk out with me; I want to look more about, and to see the Chapel and the burial-place. I imagine all that ragged crew that beset us on our arrival will be elsewhere now—perhaps with the servants in the kitchen, if they have such a place."

"Oh! I'll answer for that," said Colonel Pennington, "and a cellar to boot; or my friend has a nose which does him wondrous wrong!"

They now repassed the desolate gallery, and reached the entrance, where, to the dismay of Lord Mowbray, he encountered Smiling Bill.

"What, ho! my friend, go fetch the steward, and tell him I wish to see the Chapel."

This he did as much to get rid of him, as to find the way thither; and while he paced the platform in front of the Castle, and looked

round him on every side, he exclaimed to Colonel Pennington, "Where can the Chapel be situated? We seem to be perched high enough to see every thing for twenty miles round, and not a vestige of Chapel or Holyrood can I discover."

At that moment Smiling Bill came from the porch, with a bunch of large keys in his hand.

"Please you, my Lord, the steward sent me with these keys to conduct your Lordship to the Chapel. He will be with your Lordship in a twinkling; but he's seeing your Lordship's cattle are well foddered up; for the stabling isn't over good, my Lord. This way, if your Lordship pleases." And before Lord Mowbray could demand the keys, or enforce his absence, Smiling Bill had strode half-way to the edge of the cliff, and was, or pretended to be, beyond hearing.

Lord Mowbray followed; but in another moment his guide had almost disappeared, and nothing but his head was to be seen above the precipice.

Another step forward, and Lord Mowbray found that a steep stair cut in the rock afforded a dangerous path along its sides ; and on following this, about half-way down, they came to a ledge of even ground, on which the Chapel was built. It was in good preservation, and, though small, of beautiful and most curious workmanship of the richest and most elaborate Gothic order. There it stood, like a lovely gem cast on a desert shore. It was a thing of beauty, dropped as it were from Heaven, to lead the soul back from earth and earthly vanities to its divine source.

Not a word was said. Smiling Bill opened the doors, and with reverential awe Lord Mowbray entered. The vault was open which was to receive his kinsman's remains ; he paused, and, sitting down on a stone bench near it, listened to the sound of the dashing waves beneath, which were in unison with the scene and with his own feelings.

“ One might well choose to be laid at rest here,” said Lord Mowbray to Colonel Penning-

ton, at length breaking silence ; “ I never saw so tranquil, and, at the same time, so appropriate a spot for the quiet of a last sleep.”

“ What signifies the spot ? ” answered Colonel Pennington, in his highest tone, to master the womanish feelings which he felt rising to his eyes—“ what signifies the spot ? all places are alike good to the good. It is where one is when alive, and above all what one does, that is of consequence. Many of your ancestors lie here, and some of them deserve to be remembered by you, looked up to by you ; but whether their bones whiten on the beach below, or crumble in these vaults, it is all one.”

“ It is so,” replied Lord Mowbray, with a sigh ; “ and yet there are feelings—”

“ Which had better be all put in requisition for active service,” interrupted Colonel Pennington, “ than be allowed to evaporate in useless sentiment. Come, my good Lord, there are many things to be thought of, believe me, which it imports you to consider. Let us be gone : ” and Lord Mowbray suffered himself to be conducted back to the Castle.

The mournful procession arrived that night, and the next day the clergyman of the parish performed the funeral service, at which Lord Mowbray, Colonel Pennington, the agent of the estate, the steward, and a few domestics, alone attended. All the persons he had seen the day before had vanished, and Lord Mowbray accounted for it, in his own mind, by the sentiment he had heard the old woman express at Abbotsbury. He had generally professed, and perhaps still continued to do so, that he valued not the opinion of the world, and cared not what was said of him; yet the remembrance of that old woman's words often recurred to him. 'Tis true that

“ Many a shaft at random sent,
Finds aim the archer never meant;
And many a word at random spoken
May wound, or heal, a heart that's broken.”

And in after life Lord Mowbray could trace the beneficial train of reflection (he even did so now) which a casual hearing of rebuke to his ancestor's memory had given rise to.

In the arrangement of his affairs, which occupied him incessantly during his stay at Mowbray Castle, a wish to conciliate the good opinion of all dependent upon him seemed the prevailing feeling in the orders which he issued; and many an abuse and encroachment on the part of his tenantry was overlooked, or but slightly noticed, in the accomplishment of this object; while all grievances were instantly redressed, complaints listened to with patience, even when unreasonable in themselves, and promises of reward held out to laudable and proper exertions of industry. The Castle was to be repaired, the roads improved, and the Park and its vicinity brought into better order, so that abundance of employment was marked out to the neighbouring poor. Lord Mowbray felt happy in the idea that he was thus the cause of happiness in others. He might have done what he was then doing, perhaps, without any other impulse than that of self-interest,—for what he did was only what another in his situation would have found it advantageous to do; but Lord Mowbray felt an inward con-

sciousness that the words which had reached him at hazard, when walking through the lonely village of Abbotsbury, were the true source of his actions on the present occasion ; and the being who had so unconsciously awakened him to a sense of duty, he felt, ought not to go unrewarded.

Under this impression, he one morning left the Castle to walk to Abbotsbury and visit the cottage of the old woman, from whose lips he considered he had received so salutary a lesson. It was a bright, blowing, healthful May morning : the absence of trees and shrubs prevented that recognition of approaching summer, which in woodland scenes bursts so deliciously on the eye in every swelling bud and every fragrant blossom ; yet Nature left not Spring, her loved first-born, unhonoured, even in this treeless, flowerless, barren region. The perfumed spirit of the season met the senses ; and the fresh, peculiar odours of the ocean, with its briny plants, came delicately borne upon the gusty breeze. The white, flickering clouds, their edges slightly tinged with a roseate hue, chased

each other in quick succession through the tranquil firmament. The skylarks, poised high in air, gave out their triumphant melody of song, which, in verity, seems music that is mid-way to heaven; and the fresh, sweet smell of the new-turned earth sent forth that steaming fragrance, which forms a part of the general incense with which creation gratulates the Creator.

Lord Mowbray was in good humour with himself, enlivened by exercise, and made rich by the dispensing of his riches—that only way in which they ever make their possessor truly happy. He seemed to tread on air, and murmured something about his native soil being the most glorious in the world, which it would have delighted some of his friends to hear. As he stepped cheerfully onwards, he half whistled as he went, yet not for want of thought—no! his mind was full and his fancy busy:—but it was called from indefinite wanderings to a definite object.

Just as he reached the boundaries of the Park, and turned down the road that led to Abbots-

bury, a lady on a white steed came galloping towards him. The riding-habits and hats of the present day are assuredly not a becoming or feminine costume; and it would be well if, in this age of innovation, some improvement were made in a department of the *toilette* so much requiring it. Yet, the lady whom Lord Mowbray thus unexpectedly encountered looked graceful and lovely, spite of the disadvantages of her dress, and sat her horse without masculine assurance, though without the least appearance of timidity. Some white and dove-coloured greyhounds followed her course, and one of these she reined in her horse to notice; for it seemed to have picked up a thorn in its rambles, and came limping to her call. In stooping down to caress and examine her favourite, as it stood on its hind paws, and rested on her foot, a sudden gust of wind carried off her hat, and away it rolled. In an instant she lightly leapt from her saddle, and, giving her horse's reins into her attendant's hand, pursued the truant hat; but every time

she stooped to catch it, away it went again, as though winged by magic, and away after it flew its mistress, as if she too had wings; the faster it rolled, the faster she ran, laughing gaily as the prize eluded her grasp.

For a minute Lord Mowbray was immovable—but in another he joined the chase, and found it no easy matter to rival in fleetness the agile step of the beautiful creature that flitted before him. Fortunately, another breeze of wind bore the hat fairly over a hedge, and here the lady was at fault. Laughing and breathless, her cheeks blooming with the most vivid, yet most delicate colour, such as the healthful breath of morning alone imparts, she now in her turn stood motionless; while Lord Mowbray, leaping the barrier, secured the object of pursuit. And as he restored it, said with much animation, that, indeed, it did not merit the honour of belonging to one so fair, and was unworthy of its happy destiny.

Had the lady known how seldom any compliment escaped the lips of the person who addressed her, she would perhaps have appeared more flattered at this homage. But confusion

or carelessness, it was impossible to say which, marked her reply; and thanking him courteously, though briefly, she vaulted into her saddle as she spoke; and the offending thorn having been removed from the greyhound's foot by her attendant, lady and dogs and servant were soon lost to the view of Lord Mowbray.

In the days of faery, he would have fancied himself under the influence of some enchantment, and that the bright vision he had seen was a being called from the region of spirits; but, as it was, he quickened his step towards the village to inquire concerning the name and condition, if possible, of this beautiful and fleeting visitant. It might be, that the original purport of his walk to Abbotsbury was a little diverted by the circumstances that had occurred on his way thither; but he stopped, notwithstanding, at the cottage (it is possible it might also have been the first he met with on his road) of the old woman who had so unwittingly taught such a useful lesson to him; and, putting a purse well filled into her hand, asked whether or not she had seen a lady pass by mounted on a white horse that morning?

“Lauk, Sir! I never has no time, not I, to look at the folks as goes by. But I did see Mrs. Carter going to market on White Sall. It couldn't be her, I'm thinking? But what's the purse for, and this power of silver?”

“The purse is for you, my good woman,—keep it: and ask of your neighbours, if they have better eyes, whether they have seen such a lady as I describe, go by, and who she is—and let me know the next time I come this way.” And so saying, he escaped the profession of her thanks, and hastened forward to make inquiries elsewhere; but everywhere those inquiries failed, and everywhere he received the same answer in effect. Nobody had seen the lady on a white horse, nobody knew any thing about her, and, moreover, nobody seemed to care. At length, wearied and provoked, he returned to the Castle.

The end of a walk is not always as pleasant as the commencement. Lord Mowbray was partly fatigued, partly provoked: the landscape became darkened by the overcasting of the weather—a strong north-east wind blew

cuttingly—the skylarks dropped into their nests; and all the aroma of the earth passed away with the sunshine.

Lord Mowbray entered his Castle, certainly with very different sensations from those with which he had left it; and declaring there was no dependance upon English climate for four hours together, drew his chair close to the fire, and cowering over it, indulged in his usual malady—ennui. He was disturbed from nursing this humour by a loud noise, in which the shrill voice of his valet, Le Brun, was heard pre-eminently acute.

“Milor,—Monseigneur!” cried the enraged Le Brun, “I never once did present me before your Lorship, pour vous déranger vid my complaints, quoique souvent j’ai souffert peines et martyres de Messieurs les Anglois; et si ce n’étoit mon attachement pour Monseigneur, Milor, il y a bien long-temps que je ne servais plus ici. Mais, Monseigneur, si je continuois de supporter les affronts de vos gens, mon honneur serait éternellement compromis, et ma confusion serait extrême.”

“What *is* the matter?—what is all this noise about?” asked Lord Mowbray, seeing Le Brun pursued by the cook; and he himself bearing a dirty towel in his hand, which he waved around his head with furious gestures.

“Voyez ce torchon, Milor! Vat is de matter? De matter lie here in dis—in dis dirty torchon. It was attaché, Milor,—oui, vraiment!—it vas attaché à mes culottes; and all de household point dere finger at me, and grin. Ils rient, ma foi! ils riront, mais ce sera d’une autre façon!”

“Silence, I command you, Le Brun! What is the meaning of all this noise?”

“My Lord,” replied the cook, “may it please your Lordship, Mounseer has ruined my roast, and your Lordship can have no dinner to-day; so I threatened to put him on the spit instead of the beef which he spoiled, that ’s all.”

“Vous! me mettez à la broche! Je vous grillerais à la crapaudine premierement. But dat is not all:—I vas preparing une tasse de caffè, when Madame Betti, sa chere amie, m’a appliqué ce cadeau que voilà. I am very sorry, Milor, to quit Monseigneur, but I come to

resign—c'en est fait ! mon honneur est souilli :—
I am all covered vid ridicule, and I depart at
de soonest."

Lord Mowbray could hardly help laughing,
while he ordered the cook to compromise the
matter.

"Not till I have pulled his French ears well,
and be hanged to him," muttered the cook :
"has he not spoiled my top dish, and scalded
my legs?"

"Well, but you provoked him first."

"I provoked him, my Lord ! I scorn to
touch him with a pair of tongs, a frog-eating
rascal."

"Milor, it vas Madame Betti, his chere
amie, who did put de affron upon me : and
dat was de same you know, Milor."

"Well, Le Brun," interrupted his Lordship,
"they shall beg your pardon, and for my sake
I hope you will agree with them. I have a little
commission for you to execute, which will take
you away for a day or two, and by that time
you will return, and all this will be blown over."

"Oh, oh ! dat alters de all, cela change tout :
when Milor command, his servant must obey."

“And as for you, Harris,” said his Lordship, “show yourself better-hearted than to affront a friendless foreigner. If I do not care about the loss of my roast beef, you need not.”

The cook did not seem willing to admit the truth of Lord Mowbray’s conclusion on this point; but as the cause was going against him, he retired: muttering, however, as he went something about foreigners, and partiality, and repent it, &c. &c.

“Le Brun,” said Lord Mowbray, calling to his valet as he began bowing, and was preparing to follow his adversary; “stop, I want to speak with you.”

“Me voici, Milor.”

“Do you know the names of any of the noblemen’s seats in this neighbourhood? You are generally apt to make yourself master of the *carte du pays* pretty quickly.”

“Oh, yes! Milor, Monseigneur scait qu’il y a Milor Neville, et le Duc de Godolphin, qui sont assez proches voisins. Dere chateaux be only some few miles off.”

“Do any of their inhabitants ride out?”

It is astonishing what foolish questions sensible men sometimes ask.

“Milor, vats your pleasure? Excusez me, I no *understand*. Les Dames de ces lieux vont elles souvent prendre l’air à cheval? Oh, oh! il me semble, Monseigneur—” smiling, and then suddenly becoming grave again: “il me semble qu’en effét je comprends à present. Si les dames se promonent à cheval,—walk upon de horseback? Oh! Milor wish to know, Le Brun will make his business to ascertain. Milor saura cela au plus vite: wheder de ladies walk in a carriage or upon top de horseback.”

“Exactly! and what is their name, and how long they remain in this part of the country.”

“How long dey fix here? combien de temps ils comptent sejourner ici? how long dey count to stay in dese parts? Dat shall be known to Milor vidout fail. I shall be on de return as quick as de vind. He blow brisk here, Monseigneur knows.”

Le Brun’s wrath was entirely laid, in the prospect of having a commission to execute quite

to his taste. Now, he thought, if my Lord begins to take any interest in the society of ladies, he will become quite an improved and altered man. Some days, however, elapsed before the information could be procured; and when it was, it only amounted to this:—that a large party had been at Lord Barnstaple's, among whom were General Montgomery and his two nieces, both of whom were very fond of riding, and frequently took that amusement. One of them rode on a white horse.

“Bravo, Le Brun!” said Lord Mowbray, when his servant had given him this account.

“Mais je regrette d'ajouter,” Le Brun continued, with a melancholy air; “que ces dames sont parties, elles demeurent à ce que j'ai pu savoir, pres de *Soutamton*—”

“Southampton?”

“Oui, précisément. Milor Barnstaple's valet said *Soutamton*. Monseigneur a-t-il d'autres ordres à me donner? Any command to lay upon me?”

“Nothing more at present.”

Le Brun bowed, and felt quite satisfied that

he should now become an indispensable requisite to Lord Mowbray, since there was a lady in the case.

Colonel Pennington had been agreeably surprised to observe the deep interest that Lord Mowbray appeared to take in Mowbray Castle, and in the future management of the extensive property around it; but he began to fear that this feeling was gradually dying away, and that with the novelty of the pursuit, its pleasure was expiring. Under this impression, and with the conviction that to maintain such a feeling was of vital importance to the happiness of a man of Lord Mowbray's turn of character, he studied with the most friendly zeal the best means of keeping it alive. Observation and reflection led him to think that a temporary absence from the scene, before satiety should destroy the relish of its pleasures and pursuits, would be the most likely course to ensure success to his wishes: and he made proposals to Lord Mowbray, in consequence, to accompany him in a visit which he had engaged to make in Hampshire.

“As soon, my Lord, as you have put things

in train here, I do not see that your actual presence will be wanted for some time: not that I wish you to neglect this place," continued Colonel Pennington, "quite the contrary; but I believe we are all the better for changing the scene, and you will return with more interest when you think you are to see your improvements in a state of more forwardness."

"But where is it you are going to take me?" replied Lord Mowbray.

"Oh, it is to the house of the oldest and the very kindest friend I have—to General Montgomery's, not very far from Southampton."

"Montgomery! Southampton!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray, with some surprise; "are you acquainted with General Montgomery?"

"Yes, to be sure, and have been these fifty years and more—why do you look so surprised?—but will you go with me?"

"Oh! certainly," said Lord Mowbray, with more than usual alacrity—"with much pleasure."

"Well, then, I will write to Montgomery to say, he may expect you with me—when shall

I say? will a fortnight suffice for the arrangements still to be made at this Castle of yours?"

"Oh, undoubtedly," answered Lord Mowbray; "sooner, if you like."

"Why what the deuce makes the man in such a hurry, and what made him look so astonished just now?" said Colonel Pennington to himself as he took up his pen, and was sitting down to write to his friend, with the information that Lord Mowbray would accompany him to Montgomery Hall.

The prospect held out in the approaching visit seemed to inspire both parties with renewed spirits. Lord Mowbray was elated with the idea of change; his curiosity in regard to the fair incognita (if Le Brun's information were correct) might perhaps have added to the satisfaction he experienced, although, till the name of Montgomery recalled the circumstance, he had almost forgotten whatever interest that circumstance had excited. Colonel Pennington, too, was delighted to observe this change in his friend, which he attributed to his feeling that his stay at the Castle was no longer as a

duty he was called on to perform and which he could not evade.

The days preceding their departure passed rapidly away—final orders were to be given, and arrangements definitively made—certain ameliorations in the condition of the tenantry immediately in the vicinity of the Castle were to be carried into effect under Lord Mowbray's eye; for even in the *ennui* which had at times taken possession of him, he had never abandoned the object that first roused him to exertion on coming there. And as the period of his leaving the Castle approached, he proved himself more anxious than ever that his intentions in this respect should be realized. His time, therefore, was fully occupied; and he found in Colonel Pennington an active and able coadjutor in all the plans and proposals he suggested for the comfort of those around him.

As they were talking over, on the evening preceding their departure, what had been done, and what still remained to do, to complete the improvements, Colonel Pennington started from his chair, exclaiming, "Do come to the window,

Lord Mowbray, and see that blaze of light—what can it be?” They approached close to the casements, and perceived a lurid glare of fire which, though its source was hidden from them, proceeded evidently from some large conflagration on the shore immediately beneath; for its red light gleamed far across the waves, and, mingling with the silvery moonshine, afforded a combination of colours that was perfectly magical; while the cliff, circling on either side the building, was shrouded in obscurity, or showed only its ragged outline illuminated at intervals as the flames shot upwards.

“Let us inquire what all this means,” said Lord Mowbray.

“Let us go *and see* rather,” said Colonel Pennington; “for your people will be too indolent to inquire, or perhaps some of them here may not be overwilling that you should know the truth.” And so saying, they left the apartment. Lord Mowbray called to the servant usually in attendance near the door, but no answer was returned.

“The fellow is gone to see the fire, my Lord,

depend upon it," said Colonel Pennington; "but how he should have caught sight of it through that thick door, or have known it was in existence, I do not understand."

They crossed the hall, and, opening the portal, found themselves on the grassy sward white with dew, and glittering in the fresh and pure moonlight. The atmosphere towards the coast, however, appeared glowing with fire, and the Castle presented a solemn mass of shade where opposed to it.

Lord Mowbray walked to the edge of the cliff, towards the path leading to the Chapel. Still nothing appeared to satisfy them as to the cause of the illumination, which they saw rising more strongly than ever from beneath the butting rock on which they stood. The moon afforded them light enough to guide them in their descent, and Lord Mowbray, followed by his companion, proceeded down the winding declivity.

"What can it be?" said Lord Mowbray.

"Why, I rather suspect," replied Colonel Pennington, "that it is a signal to smugglers

on the coast ; and if our appearance does not disturb the party, we may have an opportunity of seeing how they manage these affairs—keep close, my Lord, to the side of the cliff, for otherwise our figures will catch the reflection from the fire.”

They had already reached the platform, which stood before the entrance to the Chapel, when Lord Mowbray stopped—“ I think I hear voices,” he said, in a whisper.

“ Hush ! hush !” answered Colonel Pennington, and they stood quite still : “ I also hear voices,” resumed the Colonel ; “ and music too, or else my ears deceive me : why, the rascals have run their cargo, I suppose, and are now making merry over it : let us go and try to get a peep at them.”

They stole gently down the continuation of the path ; though, as the ostensible reason for its formation seemed at an end when they had reached the Chapel, it was narrower and more difficult ; and then, too, Lord Mowbray’s acquaintance with its turnings and windings had ceased. By the help of the flame below, how-

ever, which began to illuminate the rock now very generally, they made their way well enough till, at a sudden turn, not many fathoms above the shore, they came abruptly in sight of a deep cavern on the beach; its dark recesses gleamed with torches, and at its entrance was burning the fire that had first attracted their attention from the Castle windows. Lord Mowbray started back a few paces, and, laying his finger on his lips, led Colonel Pennington to the spot.

By advancing a little, they had now a full view of what was passing within; and the Colonel, making signs to Lord Mowbray to follow his example, placed himself on his knees, and stooping down, they remained effectually concealed from observation by the rude parapet left in the rock. It would be difficult to describe the group and the scene that they witnessed; but from the mixture of foreign dresses, and the circumstance of many of the party being attired in seamen's habits, Colonel Pennington's suspicion, that it was altogether an affair of smugglers, did not appear improbable.

However, there were females in the company, and Lord Mowbray's surprise and entertainment were extreme, as he saw his man, Le Brun, with all his airs and graces, lead out a remarkably pretty girl, French apparently by her dress, and perform a minuet with her in the midst of the surrounding party: the man playing the fiddle too, though partly obscured by a projecting side of the rock, he thought was his old acquaintance, Ben Hardy; and he recollected the fellow's casuistry when he questioned him about having always earned an honest livelihood. The minuet received great applause, and a song was called for; but before this began, the liquor was served round; and Lord Mowbray's dismay was extreme, as he saw the person who officiated as steward at the Castle step forward, attended by a fellow in his own livery, bearing a reeking bowl of some hot liquor, which the steward served out to each guest in rotation, and then the song commenced; it was very easy to any one who had once heard his voice, to recognize, in the strain that followed, the powerful note of smiling Bill; and

as the whole company joined in chorus, and seemed too much taken up with their entertainment to observe any movement made by the party in ambush, Lord Mowbray jogged Colonel Pennington's elbow, and they crept away in silence.

It was well they had thought of moving, for the dying embers of the fire now scarcely sent up light enough to direct them in their path; and the moon had already passed behind the Castle, and left the shore in obscurity. They paused when they left the platform in front of the Chapel.

“A pretty rascal that steward, my Lord, to be leagued with such a band!” observed Colonel Pennington: “they are, depend upon it, one-half of them smugglers from the opposite coast, and the other half their confederates on this side the water.”

“I confess I am more sorry than surprised,” said Lord Mowbray; “for I did not augur well of the characters who surrounded us on our arrival here. Do you remember, Pennington, the hang-dog countenance of that fellow

whom they call Smiling Bill? It becomes, however, a serious matter, indeed, when I find the man holding chief authority in the Castle at the head of them: there is no saying exactly what may be in his power, or how far this misrule extends; it will require consideration before I act."

"True," replied Colonel Pennington, beginning to ascend the path which led to the Castle—"true enough, and I will give you my opinion on that point presently; meanwhile, I think, we had better regain our apartment quietly, and as quickly as we can; the party will else be separating: and should our knowledge of their proceedings be suspected, it may prove a means of preventing a full discovery of the facts:—depend upon it, you have artful knaves to deal with."

Lord Mowbray assented to this advice, but added, "I shall see my agent to-morrow, before we go; and I shall leave directions with him, to have the path from the Chapel to the beach, as well as every other access to it, blocked up. This will be one means of cutting off communi-

cation, and can excite no wonderment. The privacy of the immediate neighbourhood of the Castle requires the precaution."

By this time they had reached the summit of the cliff, and in a few moments re-entered the Castle walls. Every thing wore the same repose; and the same stillness reigned as when they crossed its dreary portal. It was clear that every inmate had forsaken it, and, with the exception of themselves, had been bidden to the festival of the cavern. This circumstance added still more to the conviction which both Lord Mowbray and Colonel Pennington felt, that the proceedings of the evening, from some motive or other, were intended to remain a secret; and although no immediate step was taken against the parties concerned, Lord Mowbray issued such orders on the morrow previous to his departure, as would probably render a recurrence of the same scenes difficult, if not impossible.

CHAPTER II.

The soote season that bud and bloom ferth brings,
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale ;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings ;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale ;
Summer is come ! for every spray now springs ;
The hart hath hung his old head o'er the pale ;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings ;
The fishes float with new repaired scale ;
The adder all her slough away she flings ;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies small ;
The busy bee her honey new she brings ;
Winter is gone that was the flowers bale ;
And thus I see, among those pleasant things,
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

LORD SURREY.

LORD MOWBRAY felt, when he 'set off' the next morning, that bleak and barren as he had thought this spot when he first came to it, he nevertheless could attach himself to its wild scenery. We grow to like those on whom we confer benefits, or to whom we are of use ;

and we become fond of a place which we feel to be our own, and to which our presence can be of material consequence; besides, a change which we look forward to anxiously in distant prospect, we frequently dread as it approaches nearer, and fifty times ere Lord Mowbray reached Montgomery Hall, he repented him of having consented to go there.

“ Perhaps,” thought he, “ this beautiful vision which haunts my imagination may prove different from what my fancy painted her when seen on the wilds of Dorsetshire; and should she prove, in fact, ever so beautiful, what is that to me?” With these and similar wayward thoughts, Lord Mowbray entered Montgomery Hall.

It was late in the evening when they arrived, and he had to pass through a tedious ordeal; for, after having been introduced to General Montgomery, he was in due order presented to every individual of the society there assembled, by the General himself.

“ My niece, Lady Emily Lorimer; my niece, Lady Frances Lorimer; my friend and kins-

woman, Miss Marian Macalpine—I beg her pardon for having forgotten to name her before. Her friend, Miss Paterson; both of them near relations of my mother's. Mr. Samson Skinner, and Mr. Abraham Aldget, my friends and agents; and though last, not least, my worthy Knight of the Thistle, Sir Richard Townley."

Lord Mowbray, always shy, was peculiarly so on the present occasion. One glance had told him that his fair huntress was Lady Emily Lorimer, but she did not seem to recognise him; and though at first this had been rather a relief, yet afterwards it was not flattering to his feelings; and, looking at her more leisurely, he thought she was not so handsome as he had fancied her to be; neither perhaps was she, in fact, as beautiful at this moment as when exercise and the fresh air, and the excitement of pursuing her hat when blown away by the wind, had lent to her all those graces of action and emotion, which give to beauty its greatest, but at the same time its most evanescent charm.

While General Montgomery continued to go through the regular routine of introduction, Lord Mowbray merely bowed in silence; and the General, having fulfilled what he conceived to be an indispensable part of polite hospitality, hastened to his rubber of whist, the clock having struck nine; and the habit of portioning out time having become a part of his nature, nothing discomposed him so much as being obliged to forego the regular occupations at the regular hours: and happy are those whose youth has been so spent, that this blessed love of order gradually settles into a fixed habit in declining years;—it is seldom or ever seen, where a life of vicious pleasure or idleness has previously unfitted the mind for those serene enjoyments, which attend a dignified and virtuous old age.

In General Montgomery, this was beautifully exemplified. He had passed gradually, and without any violent or abrupt transition, from active and healthful youth into the vale of honoured years: all the finest pleasures of existence remained to him still, vivid and un-

impaired; and when the hour came at which the card-table was set out, and his loved niece, Emily, was waiting for him with her gay defiance, the General felt that youth of spirit which continues to find interest in the simplest enjoyment.

Lord Mowbray having declined playing at cards, the usual party, consisting of Miss Macalpine, Sir R. Townley, the General and Lady Emily sat down to whist. Mr. Aldget engaged Colonel Pennington at backgammon; Mr. Skinner was busily employed in examining a plan of the estate, with some proposed improvements annexed; and while Lady Frances worked some gold embroidery, Lord Mowbray pleased his eyes with looking at her white fingers; and now and then agreeing to some commonplace observation she made, or merely half dissenting by the interrogatory, "Do you think so?"

"What a tiresome thing it is," said Lady Frances, after a long pause, and looking towards the card-table, "to do the same dull things at the same dull hour! That everlasting whist makes me quite sick. One of the reasons

which induces me to hate the country is, that I see it takes effect upon every body more or less, and renders them stupid, at least silent, which is much the same thing. I am afraid at last that I shall grow into a clock, and never say any thing but tic-tic."

"A clock!" rejoined Lord Mowbray, with a smile; "one might as well be a clock as any thing else, for aught I know; it would save one a deal of trouble to be wound up regularly, and set a-going for the four-and-twenty hours; besides, after all, few people say any thing better worth listening to than tic-tic!"

Lady Frances raised her eyes to the speaker, to see if it were possible this speech could have been pointed at her: but his Lordship's eyes were closed or nearly so; and he seemed to have forgotten that it was necessary to speak at all, so long a silence followed this effort at conversation.

"Doublets, by all that is unlucky!" suddenly exclaimed Colonel Pennington in a voice which made them all start.

"Softly! my good friend," cried General

Montgomery, looking over his shoulder; "I believe he thinks he is storming a fort!"

"Bless me, Lady Emily! I wish you would mind what you are about!" cried Miss Macalpine; why you have trumped my queen, and lost the odd trick, and they are at nine; and that's a double and single, and the rubber, and there's eighteen-pence lost to me for ever: it's so much the mair provoking, that if ye would but mind, ye are no so bad at it; but ye're aye thinking o' something or anither—that's no the game o' whist; what made you so heedless, lassie? you can play well enough when you mind what you are about; but that little head is running upon something else, I'm thinking!"

"Ah! do not scold me, my dear Alpinia!" (the name of affection which Lady Emily gave her.) "We shall beat them well another evening."

"Pay me my half-crown, Emily!" said the General; "you know you would have a bet."

"There it is, dear uncle," said she, laughing; "but I will have two for it at some future time."

“Dearest and best!” cried the General, kissing her, “you shall have your revenge now, if you like it.”

“Oh, no! not now, if you please; you know it is time for a little music.”

“Ay, very true: let us have that delicious *Di Piacer!*” and, to the regret of Miss Macalpine, music banished cards: not that she disliked music, only she liked cards better.

“Is your Lordship fond of our Scottish airs?” said Miss Macalpine, addressing Lord Mowbray.

“I like them now and then, when they are sung with taste and spirit and in the true Scottish style; but I am afraid,” (smiling) “that my real predilection is for Italian music.”

“Well, you shall hear Lady Emily sing

‘Will ye go to the Ewebuchts, Marian?’

and tell me true if ever ye heard the like, far or near!”

They now adjourned to the music-room: Lady Frances sat down to the piano; Lady Emily drew the harp towards her; the General took his flute, and the concert commenced.

There is something in a family concert, even when the performers are only moderately skilled in music, which is peculiarly harmonious, owing to a kindred touch and feeling; and also perhaps to the *habit* of studying and playing together: and if this be the case in merely instrumental pieces, how much more decidedly is it so in vocal music. Is there any thing more striking than the similar tones which harmonize so divinely together in the voices of near relations who sing in parts? they are like shades of the same colours, all differing, yet all agreeing, fading, mingling, contrasting, and blending in one perfectly harmonious whole. When listening to the concord of sweet sounds thus poured forth from fraternal and filial song, it is difficult to conceive that a moral concord should not always continue to exist between the parties; and that the soft melody of sweetly attuned voices should not pervade the whole of their intercourse with each other. But, alas! relations are parted—sometimes cruelly parted, by the jealous or evil passions of others: absence produces estrangement; estrangement

leads to forgetfulness; and all the sweet influences of natural affection are dispersed and vanish like those dulcet sounds which die in their very birth. It is, however, some consolation to think, that the ties of consanguinity cannot be broken by mortal hatred or mortal malice; they will, every now and then, make themselves to be felt: and the sound of a well-known voice, or the melody of an oft-sung air, will frequently bring back the tenderness of recollected love, after long years of cold neglect and apparent oblivion.

It was impossible, when hearing General Montgomery and his nieces tuning their voices together in song, not to feel soothed into a forgetfulness of worldly evil; and even those persons who were least alive to tender impressions, acknowledged somewhat of this balmy sensation,—at least during its immediate influence.

The General's voice was most peculiar: it still retained much of the power and charm it had once possessed, and was a clear deep tenor, as singular in its quality of tone, as he was him-

self unlike any being that ever lived in the union of sweetness with nobility of disposition. Lady Frances was a perfect musician ; the ear found no fault with her execution and skill, but there was a touching richness in her sister's voice which spoke to every heart. Music was as necessary a mental aliment to this family as any other food is to common existence ; and the General required from his nieces the tribute of a song every evening. Those who had no particular taste for music had ample freedom to absent themselves, and found abundant means of amusement in the library or the billiard-room.

Lord Mowbray having got over the first introduction, and being comfortably established on a sofa, was pleased with what he conceived to be the usual routine of the house. It suited him exactly : there was an absence of form, and a tranquillity in the manners of General Montgomery, which were precisely according to his ideas of comfort. The visionary admiration which he had entertained in his fancy for Lady Emily was considerably lowered in tone ; but

Lady Frances's beauty was splendid, and he found no great difficulty in transferring his *penchant* from the one sister to the other. As he sat, therefore, during that first evening of his arrival, admiring the graceful bend of her well-turned neck, and watching the motion of her fairy fingers, he thought inwardly that, providing a woman could always look as beautiful, he should care very little whether she ever did any thing better worth doing than net silk purses.

From this wise reverie he was disturbed rather unpleasantly by Miss Macalpine's affirmation that he had never heard any thing so charming as "Will ye go to the Ewebuchts, Marian?" He prepared, however, with as good a grace as he could, to have his ears excruciated by a drawling Scotch tune. In this he had been agreeably disappointed; it was a charming air, sung with exquisite feeling and simplicity; and Lady Emily afterwards proved that, though she sung Scotch airs to please Miss Macalpine, and Handel to please the General, she was not insensible to the power of

Italian music. On the contrary, she sang Caraffa's exquisite airs with a style and expression which enchanted even the delicate and practised ear of Lord Mowbray; and as music was declared to be the ruling taste and grand business of the house, he felt relieved to think that his complaisance would not be put to the rack while he listened to it.

General Montgomery at length drew out his watch, and pronounced the hour to be come for retiring. "Before you all go," he said, "I must call a Council of War to know what plans are formed for the amusement of the morrow—we must do the honours to Lord Mowbray, and show him the beauties of our forest."

Colonel Pennington immediately proposed a fishing-party, and Lady Emily warmly seconded it: "Because," she said, "we must go by the famous bed where the lilies of the valley grow in such profusion; and I want to procure some, roots and all—so, if you please, dear uncle, I will take Rose to help me."

Lady Frances observed sneeringly, "Emily

cannot go any where without Rose, you know ; —Rose is one of her most obsequious slaves, and Emily cannot do without a slave : I am sure, if my place is wanted, I shall very joyfully resign it, for I am not particularly fond of either fishing or flower-gathering.”

“ No, no ! my Queen,” cried General Montgomery, “ I cannot do without *you* ; but there is plenty of room for pretty Rose, if Emily wants her : besides, you know, we shall pass close to the Duke of Godolphin’s, and you can pay a visit to your friend Lady Arabella.”

“ I thank you, my dear uncle,” replied Lady Frances, brightening up ; “ I shall extremely enjoy seeing Lady Arabella.”

And now every thing seemed to be easily arranged. Miss Macalpine, from certain associations and recollections, had conceived the idea that she had a right to appropriate Lord Mowbray to herself : she had formed a design upon him, which, though in itself quite innocent, gave an amusing importance and mystery to her manner, as she began counting heads, and

arranging the different persons in the different carriages after her own wishes, finishing thus:—

“ And then, Lord Mowbray, I ’m thinking, will like to go in the pony phaeton, and it ’s just the same to me where I ’m placed. I can just go with him, you know.”

General Montgomery winked to Lady Emily; for he always saw through these little contrivances, and enjoyed them.—“ But you forget, Miss Macalpine,” he said, turning to her, “ that we all want to enjoy Lord Mowbray’s society, and we are not going to resign him to you *en tête-à-tête*.”

“ Oh weel,” said Miss Macalpine, defeated but not put out of temper, “ have it just as you please, General: I only thought the other carriages would be filled, and that you would like to have Lady Emily to yourself, General.”

“ As you would like to have Lord Mowbray all to yourself—eh! Miss Macalpine?” said the General, archly—“ but leave us to marshal our troops our own way.”

Lord Mowbray, who knew nothing of the genuine goodness and singleness of heart which distinguished Miss Macalpine, just understood enough of this dialogue to be alarmed at the prospect held out to him, for the ensuing day, of being imprisoned in a pony phaeton, with a very plain and rather formal old maid, who spoke with a Scotch accent, and took snuff; he therefore really felt grateful to the General for making a diversion in his favour, while Poor Miss Macalpine, a little disconcerted, walked out of the room.

“Confess,” said the General laughing, “that was what you call taking the place by storm—was it not, my Lord? But if poor Miss Macalpine has her little foibles, they are so amply compensated for by her noble qualities, that one may the more readily allow oneself a little laugh now and then at her expense. Do not, however, suffer this desperate attempt of the enemy to discompose your slumbers—depend upon it, there are carriages enough and to spare for all our party.”

Then followed the parting compliments for

the night, the hoping Lord Mowbray would feel himself at home, the kindly trust that Colonel Pennington had long done so, and they retired to their several apartments.

“What sort of a day is it?” were the first words of Lady Emily as her maid entered her room the next morning.

“Rather overcast, my Lady,” was the reply; and many were the anxious looks she gave towards the window, during the time she was dressing, to ascertain whether it would or would not rain.

“Always the rain and the fine weather, Emily?” said her sister to her: “when will you learn to forget there is such a thing as weather?”

“Never—sister, till I forget there are such things as pleasant fields and woods and walks to ramble through, and which I cannot enjoy when the wet prevents my resorting to them.”

“Well, upon the whole,” said Lady Frances, yawning as she too prepared to rise, “I do sometimes envy you in the country, because you find so much amusement in things that

don't amuse me in the least ; but then you have not come out yet, though you are a year older than I was when I was presented ; and I have a notion, Emily, that a season in London would make a wondrous change in your ideas—cure you, in short, of this sentimental rusticity.”

“ If you mean to say that I should enjoy the amusements of London excessively, I have no doubt of it ; but why should you doubt that my delight also in the country is genuine ?”

“ Why ? why, because it is so unnatural.”

“ O Frances, love, say rather that you are unnatural. Do not, however, let us dispute about it, but, on the contrary, try how well you can entertain yourself this day, and I will do every thing in my power to please you.”

So saying, with light heart and bounding step, she descended to the breakfast-room.

“ I am sure it will not rain to-day,” said Lady Emily, after the salutations of the morning had passed. “ Do you think it will, dear uncle ?”

“ No, my Emily !” he replied, tapping the

tube of the weather-glass; "I can answer for it, it will not."

"It is just the very day for fishing," observed the Colonel: "the fish will rise beautifully: such a mild atmosphere, neither dark nor light; and such a dappled grey in the East."

"Oh! what a charming day we shall have!" cried Lady Emily. "Come, Alpinia, make haste, put on your walking-shoes, and arm yourself for an expedition with me. I am going lily-hunting with Rose, and we must not be balked of our enjoyment for want of a few sensible preparations and common comforts. You see I practise as I preach:" and she pointed, laughing, to her walking-boots, which could not disguise all the beauty of the small feet they defended; and her dark silk pelise, which showed to advantage her fair and delicate complexion, sparkling with added colour from the excitement of the moment: "and now," said she, "we can brave ditches and brambles, and pursue our recreation unimpeded by finery, at least."

Lady Frances cast a contemptuous glance at

her sister. "You really have made yourself a proper figure," said she. "I wonder how my uncle can allow it!"

Not so Lady Frances herself, whose attire was a light summer costume, as costly and fashionable as though she had been going to some *fête* in town. Beautiful she was, undoubtedly; but as Lord Mowbray's eyes dwelt on her, and then turned to her sister, he could not help reading a transcript of the character of each in their choice of an habiliment for the morning's diversion; and the silent comparison was in favour of Emily. It was decided, however, that he should accompany Lady Frances in one carriage, with General Montgomery and Sir Richard Townley; while the Colonel, Lady Emily, Miss Macalpine, and Miss Paterson, occupied the other. Rose Delvin was to follow in the pony phaeton; where, as they were going a considerable distance, and did not expect to be back till dark, arrangements had been made to convey sundry cold refreshments, of which Lady Emily had undertaken the charge.

"But," said General Montgomery, "we

should be badly off, I fear, if I trusted entirely to my sweet Emily in this department of the day's business; for I am sure, at any time, a flower would carry it over cold ham and chickens.—Are the refreshments put into the phaeton?" asked the General, turning to the servant who announced the carriages.

Lady Emily looked rather mortified at this observation of her uncle; and said half playfully, half reproachfully, "Why, my dear uncle, with all my romance, I do not really imagine myself sufficiently spiritualised to live upon flowers and air: but suppose I did, do you think that your giddy Emily would forget her uncle's wishes and comforts?"

The General, affectionately pressing Lady Emily's hand, kissed her, and said gaily, "Come, we are all ready, I believe; let us be off. The day will not be too long."

In their drive through the New Forest, the General frequently caused the carriages to stop, in order that he might point out some beautiful combination of trees, or some peep of the distant country seen through them. On these

occasions, as on all similar ones, Lady Frances seemed wholly unconscious of what was passing; but when they moved on again, and that the General's attention was engaged in conversing upon some agricultural matter with Sir Richard Townley, she talked to Lord Mowbray of the Opera,—of the last presentation at Court,—of the *debuts* of fashionable singers and admired dancers; discussing the merits of each with rather more assurance than seemed properly to belong to her age and sex. Lord Mowbray professed his ignorance upon most of these subjects, and his indifference to others, in a way provoking to Lady Frances; though it served to give an additional stimulus to her finding a topic of discourse which might engage his attention.

“Are the operas better in Italy,” at last said Lady Frances, “than in London?”

“Far better,” was the short reply.

“How so?”

“Why, because, in the first place, music is indigenous to the soil of Italy; and in the next,

we never have an opera performed in this country as it is written ; there is always something rejected or something interpolated, in order to suit it, as it is called, to the genius of an English audience ; its own genius evaporates. Perhaps, after all, it is not that the opera in Italy is in itself so superior ; for, I think, I have not seen on any stage in Italy the combination of musical talent I have occasionally seen on the opera-stage in London ; but there is something in the air of the country which renders us more susceptible of enjoyment ; we feel we are in the land of song, and give ourselves up to a mere existence of indolent and pleasurable sensation."

" You speak of Italy as if you loved it better than your own country—that is, better than London ?"

Lord Mowbray smiled at the idea of London being one's own country, and standing specifically for the whole British nation.

" Are the ladies of Italy," continued his fair catechist, " much handsomer than those of England ?"

“ That depends upon taste ; Italian beauty is all dark, forcible, and natural ; I never saw an affected Italian woman—a vain one ? yes—but their vanity is as undisguised as their other sentiments ; they are less employed about the fashions of the day—I should say, generally speaking, less taken up about the frivolous pursuits of the toilette ; they unconsciously imbibe something of the taste they see around them ; and the mere cares of dress and personal appearance have less power over their minds.”

Lady Frances coloured, and looked displeased.

“ Your Italians, my Lord,” said she, “ are, perhaps, more secure in their own charms—more sure of conquest—they can afford to be negligent ; we Englishwomen pay at least a higher compliment to your sex, by our very anxiety and mistrust of our unassisted attractions.”

“ It is a compliment I, for one, could well dispense with,” replied Lord Mowbray.

“ Lady Frances bit her lip almost through with vexation, but was not to be foiled by this unusual language. A thought of her own tran-

scendent beauty inspired her with new courage, and the absence of all objects to try her power on—nay, the very difficulty she experienced in extracting any thing in the shape of a compliment, gave her an additional stimulus to exert all her wiles, and not to allow Lord Mowbray's heart to escape the snares she set for it. She remained silent, however, as if reflecting upon what he had said; and contented herself with lifting her eyes occasionally to Lord Mowbray's, with a sort of imploring gentleness, which she well knew how to make them assume, and by degrees their silent eloquence regained for her the power she had nearly lost within the last few minutes.

The party had now left the New Forest, and passed through Stock Bridge. As the carriages were to be left there, they prepared to alight and proceed on foot. Lady Emily was the first to spring forth, like a bird from a cage, and, running to General Montgomery, gave him her arm as he was alighting.

“ Ah! there you are, dearest and best, ever ready to cheer and delight me; well, how looks

the stream, Tom?" addressing Colonel Pennington.

"Never was in better order, by what I can see, than at this moment, General; it has gathered just enough weeds during winter, and not too many; see how they float upon the current—fine buoyant weeds; none of your heavy scum, or standing mantling green."

It was indeed a beautiful day for the sport they had chosen; clear, calm, not a sunbeam to drive the finny tribe to take shelter under the banks, and no lowering clouds to scare them; a light ripple just crimped the surface of the transparent stream, and the flies darted in multitudes along its surface; Old Walton himself would have been enchanted with such a day; and Colonel Pennington, who scarcely yielded to that master-angler in his keenness for the sport, was in the highest spirits.

"Now, my Lord Mowbray," he exclaimed, "follow me; here is your basket, and here," taking out a complete set of flies from one of his many side-pockets,—“here is as fine a fly as

ever was seen. Now this is the way in which I find it most convenient to strap on my basket :” and he proceeded to equip Lord Mowbray in all the honourable accoutrements of an angler. “ Now, my Lord, follow me ; you shall take your station down there, beyond these willows : there is a fine deep pool, in which it will be hard indeed if we do not catch some delicate trout. As to myself, I shall try my fortune at the eddy, just by that large black stone ; for fish, like men, have various tastes—some affect the shallows, and some the deeper waters ; and pray let us lose no more time ; the General will, I dare say, take a rod himself ?”

“ Thank you, Tom,” replied the General, “ but I have sport of my own to follow ; I want to look at a field of lucerne, which the Duke of Godolphin’s bailiff mentioned the other day ; I should like to introduce it on my estate, if I find it answers. Do you follow your craft while I follow mine. But what say the ladies ? must we leave them to pursue their own devices ?”

Lady Emily at once decided on accompanying her uncle towards the wood,

“Where grew the lily and the eglantine.”

“And you, my queen,” said the General, turning to Lady Frances, “so long a walk would weary you; neither you nor Miss Paterson, I suspect, are very keen anglers; will you take one of the carriages and drive on to the Duke of Godolphin’s?”

“No, uncle, thank you,” replied Lady Frances, with a sentimental air; “it is such a sweet day, I think I will rove about here and look at the fishers; besides, I have brought a volume of poetry with me to read, and can sit very pleasantly under the shade of the willows till your sports are over.”

“Well,” cried Lady Emily, laughing, “I do not despair of you yet, sister. Sit by a stream and read poetry! This is the very first time in your life that you ever did any thing so romantic, I do believe.”

Though this was uttered in the unaffected surprise of the moment, Lady Frances did not

relish the truth; and answered her, by saying, that good company made many dull things palatable. Her eyes appealed to Lord Mowbray to confirm this assertion; and his silence seemed to imply the approbation she sought; for there never yet was a man who did not like to be courted, and every man can pardon follies and faults committed in his own individual favour.

“Do not be displeased, Frances,” said Lady Emily; “I did not mean to offend you. You know, I should enjoy staying with you of all things, were it not that you can do without, and that the lilies of the valley are waiting for, me.”

As she spoke with a kind of innocent archness, she looked so like one of the lilies she was going in quest of, that Lord Mowbray felt a divided admiration arise in his breast, as the childish eagerness of Lady Emily to follow her flowery sport contrasted strikingly with Lady Frances’s evident desire to attract his attention. Lord Mowbray, however, presented his arm to the latter, though his eyes pursued

the bounding step of Lady Emily, as she flew hither and thither, playfully sporting round her uncle; while General Montgomery, following her with eyes of beaming affection, seemed to grow young again in the contemplation of her artless delight. All this, Lord Mowbray saw and felt, as the fishing party strolled along the brink of the river, and the rest hastened across the plain to reach the beech-wood.

“ I mind the time when I could fly ow’r our Scottish braes just like Lady Emily yonder,” said Miss Macalpine, as she too, with an affectionate smile, gazed after the nymph-like figure which gradually lessened on their view. “ Do you not remember, Colonel, those days when I was a lassie, at Heathersden, and we used to gang up to the Craig Point?”

“ Do I remember? to be sure I do,” replied the Colonel abruptly. “ I have not lost my memory! Sometimes I wish I had,” he added, in an under tone and with a softened expression.

“ Ah, well, those days are past and over; I wish they had never been,” said Miss Macalpine.

“ And so do I, Miss Macalpine, perhaps; but what then?”

“ I ’m thinking,” she went on to say, without heeding his observation—“ I ’m thinking it’s hard we canna just remain young a’ the days we hae to bide below, there’s no so mony o’ them; I never could find the use o’ growing auld.”

“ Ah!” rejoined Colonel Pennington, “ we are not able to see the *pleasure* of growing old, I grant you; but the *use* of it is another question.”

Their conversation was interrupted by a call from Lord Mowbray. “ Do come and support Lady Frances,” he cried, “ for her shoe has stuck in this muddy ground:” and at the same moment they beheld Lady Frances, with one foot in the air, and the delicate silk shoe covered with dirt and sticking in the mire.

“ Hech, Sirs! the lassie’s come out in a pair o’ silk slippers to the fishing,” exclaimed Miss Macalpine; “ did you ever see the like o’ that?”

“ What made you do such a silly thing?” cried Colonel Pennington, angrily. “ Here you

are now without shoes; and somebody must walk back to get you a pair, and the day will be lost in going and coming: that is always the way when one has any thing to do with women."

Luckily one of the servants was within call, and he was despatched to buy a pair of shoes, such as could be found at the neighbouring village: in the mean time, Lord Mowbray spread his cloak upon the banks of the river; and on this, Lady Frances was obliged to repose, and take to her book with the best grace she could, in default of other amusement; for, to her disappointment, Lord Mowbray, after paying her compliments on her poetical studies, betook himself, though without much alacrity, to his fishing station.

"I wish," said Miss Macalpine, with a glance at Lady Frances's book, "that ye had brought a wiser-like companion wi' ye, my Lady; yon chiel, wi' a' the glammer o' his genius, has turned more heads and hearts tapsalterie than eneugh."

"Pooh!" said Lady Frances, "do not fall

into the cant of old Reviews—he is divine—which of our poets is read with more pleasure?”

“And do you never read for peace and improvement? Pleasure is a’e thing and profit’s anither; thae twa dinna whiles haud thegither; better a mutchkin o’ the ane than a pint stoup o’ t’ither.”

“Dear Miss Macalpine, a truce with truisms and moral sentences; I want something more than peace, if you please; I am not come to such a low ebb as to want peace. When I read, I read for pleasure: I like Lord Byron and Moore better than Young’s Night Thoughts.”

“Lady Frances,” replied Miss Macalpine, with infinite gravity, “I was young once mysel’, and had aye a turn to the reading, when reading wasna in vogue as it is now; or rather I should say, when ilka bodie didna think it need for to be ca’d a reader, let alane a writer; but this I ken, that if ye dinna read mair purposelike works than yon, ye’ll fare the waur when ye’re an auld woman.”

“When I am an *old woman!*” said Lady Frances, looking up.—“Really, Miss Macalpine,

you have such—a—a—very odd, abrupt way of expressing yourself—an old woman, indeed!”

“Yes, we must e’en take up in that same, like it or no,” continued the simple-minded Miss Macalpine: “we never stand still; mind or bodie, we’re aye going back or fore: if ye dinna feel that every day, as it hurtles past, has na put some good intill ye, be assured it has ta’en some awa. But ye luke tired-like, my bonnie birdie.”

“I am very sorry,” said Lady Frances peevishly, “that I ever came at all upon this horrid expedition: I wonder how I could be such a fool!”

“Hech, Sir!” cried Miss Macalpine, jumping up, “if Lord Mowbray hasna hooked a fine salmon!”

A fish he had most certainly; and away went Miss Macalpine to see him bring it to land; while Lady Frances, thanks to her silk shoes, could not move a step, having lost the one, and the other being sent on by the servant as a pattern. There she was obliged to sit; and she

had the mortification to behold Miss Macalpine standing by Lord Mowbray, and directing him how to let the fish run, and how to wind it up again: when, in the midst of her learned directions, crack went rod and line and all! and the favourite fishing apparatus of Colonel Pennington, owing to Lord Mowbray's want of skill, was utterly destroyed.

Colonel Pennington, who had been an observer of what was going on, threw down his own rod, and came as fast as he could to Lord Mowbray's assistance, but all too late! so that when he saw the fragments of his famous tackle lying broken on the margin of the stream, he could not contain his vexation, but gave way to the natural ebullition of his temper.

“Why, my Lord, what have you been about here! Miss Marian, I thought I had instructed *you* better than that! and if *he* never went a-fishing before, that at least *you* could have told him something better than to let him break my very best rod into a thousand pieces! Why in the name of common

sense did you not let out your line? What a day's sport you have lost, and broken my very best rod! the rod that played so beautifully, and would almost bear to have been bent double in skilful hands!"

"My dear Colonel, pray forgive me! I never will put your patience to the test again: and I will write to town for the very best fishing-rod that can be made."

"Forgive you, my Lord? that is not the question; but it 's enough to put a man in a passion to see people so foolish."

He then gathered up the broken fragments and went off grumbling something about women being always in the way, and always spoiling any rational scheme of amusement; and muttering something too about men being as bad, when they attempted what they knew nothing about.

Lord Mowbray, completely tired of the whole thing, felt really glad to take refuge by the side of Lady Frances; and as the servant had now arrived with a pair of shoes for her, she was once more enabled to walk, which be-

came doubly necessary, as the deceitful winds of an English spring had chilled her.

“ I am afraid, Lady Frances,” said Lord Mowbray, “ that you are suffering from cold. Suppose we take a quick walk and pursue General Montgomery ; there cannot be a better method of warming yourself.”

Lady Frances, after a few exclamations against the clumsy substitutes she had found for her delicate shoes, acceded to the proposal ; and Lord Mowbray, offering one arm to her and the other to Miss Macalpine, set off with the two ladies at a quicker pace than Miss Macalpine thought it possible Lady Frances could ever have attained to.

“ That’s right ; it’s just a pity my Lady Frances hadna your arm to gar her tak’ a brisk walk every day o’ her life,” said Miss Macalpine ; “ that would put a rose in her cheek ! There’s nothing in the world like air and exercise for that.”

When they joined Lady Emily, she displayed what she called her treasures—a basket which Rose could scarcely carry, laden with lily roots.

“ I fear me,” (said Miss Macalpine, shaking her head,) they ’ll no’ do: this is no’ the season for transplanting.”

“ Nay, dear Alpinia, say not so: I will make it the season. You know the French maxim, *ce qui est differé est perdu!* To plant a flower or a pleasure, give me the present moment! What do you say, Lord Mowbray?” she added gaily.

To a mind not wholly sophisticated, there was something delightful in this wholesome appetite for innocent enjoyment; and Lord Mowbray felt it renovate his being, as he replied, “ Well, Lady Emily, I must confess that I should like to sun myself in the atmosphere of your happy nature! But” (turning to Lady Frances) “ these are only the susceptibilities of the moment:—they cannot last.”

Lord Mowbray did not know that, on the contrary, they were the healthful principles of an innocent mind; susceptibilities indeed they were, arising out of a much more stable source than he dreamt of in all his philosophy.

“What nonsense!” said Lady Frances, shrugging her shoulders.

“I am not so sure of that either,” rejoined Lord Mowbray; “I only regret my inability to share the feeling.”

“Indeed!” rejoined Lady Frances coldly; and, at the same time, Sir Richard Townley and the General appeared in sight.

“Well,” said the good General, “what have you been about, and what sport have you had? Frances has doubtless read her book twice over, and Lord Mowbray has caught me a famous dish of fish.”

Both parties pleaded guilty of omission, but assigned many weighty circumstances in extenuation; Lady Frances was frozen with the cold; Lord Mowbray had certainly caught his fish—but then the fish had broken his rod, and thus put a final end to his attempts for that day.

“Oh! it’s all just as it should be,” exclaimed the General; “we have had a day’s harmless diversion; and if it has tried my

honest friend Tom Pennington's temper ; that 's all the harm, in fact, that has been done. I beg Frances's pardon though ; I forgot her fine shoes ! And now it is time that we return home, for more sweet hours have been wiled away than we have taken account of. The happy, they say, never count the hours ; yet that is not my opinion either ; we grow misers, I am certain, of our treasures, and learn a wonderful precision, on the contrary, in our estimate of time, in proportion as we truly enjoy it."

"Oh yes ! dear uncle," said Lady Emily ; "I have been asking every moment what o'clock it was, I was so afraid that we should not have been able to have dug up the lilies ; but we have effected every thing that I wanted to do, and the day has completely answered to me."

"I wish every day may so answer to you, my dearest and best !"

"A kind, kind wish !" replied Lady Emily ; "and one that I am sure will be fulfilled, so long as you love me !" And thus saying, she passed the General's arm through her

own, and the whole party took the road to the carriages.

When they reached them, it was found that Colonel Pennington still loitered behind; and after waiting a full hour for him, he sent word that he had hooked a fine salmon-trout; and were he to attempt to land it in a hurry, he should break another rod. He begged the party, therefore, to return home, and promised to follow as soon as he had finished his day's sport.

The pony phaeton was accordingly left to convey him, and the produce of his skill, back to the hall; while the remainder of the party, being disposed of in the other carriages, commenced their route homewards.

CHAPTER III.

“Awake! the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us—we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tender plants, how blow the citron groves,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
How Nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet.”

MILTON'S PAR. LOST.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fatigues of the preceding day, Lady Emily, “with spirits pure, and slumbers light, that fly the approach of morn,” was early up. “April showers bring May flowers,” ’tis said; “and so they have,” cried she, opening her window, and looking out at a scene not less fresh and fair than herself.

“Come, Frances, rise! it is a shame to lose this beautiful morning. Sister! sister! awake!” as she undrew the curtains of her bed.—“What,

still asleep, or only feigning? I think I see your eyelids twinkling.

· And winking Mary-buds begin
 To ope their golden eyes ;
 With every thing that pretty bin :
 My lady sweet, arise !”

“ Oh ! how tiresome you are, Emily ; you have just awakened me from the nicest dream ; —do close the bed-curtain, and let me dream it over again.”

“ Oh, no ! I will not for the world. I want to take you from the nicest dreams to the sweetest reality. It is the last day of May, and it is a day worthy to be enjoyed in the clear, cool hour of prime : haste, Frances, haste ! let us bring my uncle home a lapful of violets, before he breakfasts ; you know how much he enjoys the fragrance of those wild flowers.”

“ Nonsense, Emily ! as if the gardener could not gather those which grow in the garden. They are infinitely sweeter, and one has no trouble ; besides, I do not care about flowers— they are as insipid as every thing is that pertains to the country. Give me a splen-

did equipage, such as I was driving in, in idea, and in which one appears to so much advantage, precisely like a fine picture in a handsome frame; there is no situation in which a lady's beauty is so well displayed; while a thousand hovering beaux pace around, waiting for a look, a nod, a smile, though they affect to have their eyes fixed on vacancy, and die with envy when the favoured flirt leans his gloved hand upon the carriage-door, perfumed with the last essences imported from Paris, which are superior to all the mawkish natural sweets in the world;—and then the soft nothings addressed to one's ear, that are so vivifying and so new, because it is impossible to remember of what they consist—all this is only to be found in dear London. And of all this, you cruelly deprived me, by waking me with your dull, prozy, school-girl sentiment about a ditch, and nettles, and violets, and dry sticks in a half-green hedge—oh! it is provoking: do draw the curtains—the light puts my eyes out. Go, go like a good girl to your violets, and Rose Delvin, the farmer's daughter; she will suit you much better than I shall; and leave me to dream, since" (with a yawn and

a sigh) "it is all one can do here." And Frances buried her face in the down of her pillow.

Emily sighed as she obeyed her sister; but when she walked into the garden, a sense of delight came over her that banished reflection, and she bounded along as gay as the insect that courted the sunbeam. From the formal-dressed garden, Emily passed on to an open grove, and thence into the chase, (as it was still called,) overspread with wild flowers of a thousand hues. "Though I am no longer a child," said she, as she stooped to gather a knot of crimson-tipped daisies, "I think I love them as much as when I used to fill my frock with them long years ago." And she went on and on, culling as she went, till she came to the boundary of the enclosure. Here a row of willows bordered a streamlet that divided the chase from the road; but when she reached the spot, where a little wooden bridge usually afforded passage to the neighbouring villagers, she found it broken down and impassable, and several of the trees hacked and hewn in a merciless manner around it.

"How is this?" said Emily to herself, and

pausing; “ what has occasioned all this mischief? how is this and how shall I pass?” and she half-sprung forward to leap the streamlet; then checked herself, seeing the attempt would be fruitless; when, looking and perceiving no one nigh, she hastily drew off her shoes, and then her stockings, and prepared to ford the water. In another moment, she put in one foot, then the other, its coldness catching her breath; but in she went, notwithstanding; and, as she saw her white feet shining through the current of the limpid water, she laughed in the gaiety of her heart—it might be at their beauty, it might be at doing a thing she had never done before. Who can account for the mirth of a youthful, innocent spirit?

“ What would Frances say now, if she saw me?”

“ She would say that you are surely very adventurous, Lady Emily,” cried a voice which was familiar to her.

Emily started, looked around, and beheld, sauntering behind the willows, their guest Lord Mowbray! She coloured, dropped her garments

in the water, and, hastening to the opposite bank, sat down.

“ My Lord ! pray leave me,” she exclaimed, breathless with surprise and confusion ; “ I request you to leave me directly.”

“ Accident alone brought me here ; I can only beg a thousand pardons for my unintentional intrusion,” replied Lord Mowbray, bowing as he spoke. He took the path towards the hall, but not, as Emily observed, till he had gathered up the flowers she had dropped.

This accidental meeting greatly discomposed her and disturbed the promised pleasure of her walk ; but, replacing her dress, she made an effort to forget its occurrence, and hastened on to Delvin’s cottage. When she lifted the latch of the garden-door, Emily beheld Ambrose Philips, a young farmer, who, to use a village phrase, kept company with Rose, leaning over the low wicket, and holding her hand in his. So deeply were they engaged in conversation that they did not perceive her approach.— “ Rose, Rose, good morning, Rose !” was several times repeated in vain : at last Ambrose

started and turned round ; down rolled his hat ; he pulled his thick brown locks with one hand, in token of respect, while he sprawled with the other for the fallen hat, and bowing, slunk away.

“ Why, Rose,” said Lady Emily smiling, “ I am afraid I am come at an unlucky moment ; I am earlier than you expected—where is your mother ? and Andrew ? ”

“ Very true, my Lady ; I did not expect your Ladyship quite so soon ; but we are always glad to see you—won’t you come in and rest a bit, my Lady ? But, bless me, here is all the tail of your Ladyship’s gown daggled up to the knees ; well, it is lucky we have got a spark of fire, for I was just going to boil father’s milk for his breakfast : ”—but when Rose turned to the large fire-place, fire there was none.

“ You have been engaged with other sparks, I believe, Rose, and forgot the milk.”

“ Sparks ! ” repeated Rose with a conscious blush ; “ what does your Ladyship mean ? I am only engaged to Ambrose ; your Ladyship knows it is all fixed. Farmer Philips has promised to give up his farm to his son ; and so father and mother have given their consent, and we’re

to be married next Midsummer, my Lady, if you please."

"It pleases me very much indeed, Rose, for your sake; every body says Ambrose is a good, industrious young man. Remember, Rose, I will give you your wedding-gown."

"Your Ladyship is always good and kind; but, excuse my freedom, I wish we could hear of your buying your own!"

"All in good time, Rose; but I am so happy now, that I do not wish for any change; I can fancy none happier than my present lot!"

"No, sure! well your Ladyship must be right;—but I thought every body liked to be married—that is,—but, dear me, how wet you are!" she added, wringing the gown.

"No wonder, Rose, that I am wet:"—and Lady Emily related what had occurred.

"Why, there now," said Rose, "did not father say that something vexatious would befall? Do you know that that wicked black Giles, merely because he had a spite against Ambrose, who was hired to finish the bridge, while t'other was out of work, and no one would employ him, is suspected of having broken it down, and cut

and hacked the willows there, out of mere wickedness. My father is gone to depose, I think they call it—yes, depose before Mr. Allen all he knows of this business, and my mother has gone with him, and that is why they are not at home:” but just as Rose spoke, the old couple approached, and Emily listened with great patience to a long detail of the story over again, which was summed up by a declaration that if the Magistrate could find it in law, to clap Giles in prison, till such time as he was sent beyond seas, it would be doing the whole village a service.

Lady Emily equally endeared herself to her humble friends, as she did to those of her own sphere, by listening with a kind and unaffected sympathy to the subject of their interests; and, in the present case, comforted the Delvins, by saying, she was sure her uncle would assist in repairing their bridge, as well as in making good any other mischief that had been done to their little property.

“Ay, dear young lady,” replied the old man, “we are all sure that the good General will do every thing that is kind: but we old folks,

some how, like old things; and there is no saying when once an old friend is broke down, how he may look when he is patched up again. I remember that bridge now, man and boy, these last fifty years: and my heart misgives me that its downfal bodes no good: well, patience and time, patience and time—I've seen enough of the one, but Maud there says I hav'nt always enough of the other."

"We have all our faults, you know, good Delvin," replied Lady Emily, smiling; "and I am sure your wife loves you, faults and all; that is the only way to love and be loved! And my uncle will take care that your bridge is mended, take my word for it. In the mean time, I want Rose to accompany me: will you let her come with me?"

"Ay! to be sure, my Lady; and proud to attend your Ladyship."

Rose's hat was tied on in a moment; and she was not the less a rose, though a rustic one, than the aërial and sylph-like being whom she was called upon to attend.

Nature seemed gaily awake this fine May morning; every thing was joyously busy; the

thrushes and black-birds were flitting from bush to bush, and sending forth at intervals their exulting note of happiness, more thrillingly delicious even than their continuous song, which, while it told their own felicity, begot delight in others. The bee flitted past in many a returning circle, sounding his tiny horn; here and there a yellow butterfly, like a winged flower, settled on the new spring daisy; the lambs bleated and gambolled around their dams, as though the Creator's gift of mere existence were sufficient joy; and the unpannied ass, relieved from its burthen for awhile, was suffered to taste the dainties of the dewy herbage unmolested and at peace. But, in the midst of this joyousness, Emily was thoughtful.

“I am sorry,” she said aloud, though she was rather speaking to herself than addressing her companion—“I am sorry Lord Mowbray saw me fording the rivulet. Frances will think I did it on purpose to be seen by him; but how could I dream of his being up at this early hour?”

Rose meanwhile was busy gathering the violets, and her apron was full of purple sweets.

“ Bless me! my Lady, look here !” she exclaimed; “ see what a lovely nest I have found !”

Emily ran to look at it. “ What a beautiful thing is a bird’s nest !” she exclaimed, contemplating it, as Rose drew aside the bushy screen which shaded it; “ how wonderful! what pains the parent bird has taken to weave all those curious materials together. There, let the branches close over it again; look at it no more, for they say that strange hands disturb the quiet purity of the nest, and the bird ceases to love it when polluted by the touch.”

At that moment they were startled by a large spaniel, which brushed past them; and the next, by the appearance of a young man, of very handsome figure, who was approaching Rose in a familiar manner; but, on seeing Lady Emily, stopped, and, bowing with the air of one versed in the manners of the world, said, “ I hope you will forgive my intrusion, Lady Emily; I came to inquire of Rose Delvin, whether her father thinks I have any chance of finding trout in the stream to-day: for Andrew is my Isaac Walton, and I submit, as a scholar should do, with all due deference to his opinion.”

While speaking thus to Lady Emily, his eyes were talking another language to Rose. She blushed scarlet through the clear brown of her sun-dyed cheek, and dropped the thick fringes of her eyelids, as she replied,—“Father is at home, and he will be glad, Sir, to be of any use to you.”

Again the latter apologised to Lady Emily; and, whistling his dog after him, leaped lightly over a broken part of the hedge, and passed on.

“Who is that young gentleman, Rose? He seems to be well acquainted with my name; but I do not recollect ever to have seen him.”

“La! my lady, I thought every one knew the handsome Squire Carlton, of the Manor-House! it is the second spring he has been here. He has been kind to Ambrose, and is a very civil gentleman. He promises to be very kind to me too, and it is not long ago that he brought me a nice new ribbon, and gave me a new, beautiful, golden sovereign. But I don't know how it is, I have never worn the ribbon, and the sovereign has given me bad dreams of nights—so I put my pockets from under my

head. But pray—pray, my Lady—don't tell this to father and mother, for it's all a great, *great* secret!"

"Why so, Rose?"

"Why only because," stripping a bit of May-flower to pieces as she spoke; "why only because father—that is to say, Ambrose—that is to say—to tell you the truth, my Lady, mother said she didn't altogether like the Squire coming so often to our cottage; and talked something about *Flirtations*; and said as how that young women of my station had better not be talking to great gentlemen folks: and so I was afraid to tell them of my ribbon and my sovereign."

"Indeed, Rose, I believe that your mother was very right: she loves you better than any body else can, and has your true interest at heart. Oh! if my mother were but alive—I am sure I should hide nothing from her."

"But what can I do, my Lady?"

"I advise you, my dear Rose, by no means to have any secret from your mother. Tell her what you have told me; give her Mr. Carlton's

gifts to return to him, and I will buy you a ribbon that you may wear on Sunday proudly before any body ; yes, and give you a golden sovereign into the bargain, that will lie under your pillow without disturbing your rest."

In the eagerness of this conversation, they turned a corner of the lane, and came unexpectedly upon a numerous company of gipsies. There were so many of this wandering crew, that Emily, though interested in their mysterious race, felt somewhat alarmed, and was hastily retreating, when one of them cried out, " Never fear, pretty lasses, do not run away ; we'll never harm you ! Come now, and we'll give you news of your sweethearts."

" Hush !" said another, in the jargon of their tribe—" Puro Baros Rialhs—Behee."

" And here is moon-eyed Rose," said another, " the prettiest girl in the village. Come, cross our hands, lady,—there's a sweet lady !—with a bit of silver, and we will tell you your fortune—all that will befall you. There's good fortune, lady, in your eye, and there's a fine family and a great lord awaits you."

" And you, too," said another man to Rose,

“don’t you be envious now of the handsome lady for you, too, will ride in your coach, and be as gay as the best, and as fine as the finest, and laugh at all your poor neighbours.”

“Come,” said Emily, somewhat distressed by their crowding round her—“come, good people! I will have my fortune told, if you will send out some of your women to tell it me. Are there none in your tents?”

“Yes; there’s women enow, I warrant you. Call out little Lushee Lovel. Lushee, Lushee! the lady wants thee, thou be’est well-read in palmistry! Come forth.”

Upon this, a half-naked girl, with long, straight, black hair, that hung quite over her eyes, and reached below her waist, crawled from beneath one of the tents, and leaping up, and parting her hair with her two hands, came forward. A small, wire-haired, lean, sharp-faced cur, with a long tail, and pointed ears standing straight up, followed her on three legs, the fourth being crippled, and contracted under its body; and yelped so, for some minutes, that no other voice could be heard.

“Silence Jukel! silence her nasty tongue,”

cried a fierce-looking man, as he threw a stick at it.

“Nay, now do not hurt the dog, master, or it shall not go well with thee,” said Lushee, snatching the creature up in her arms; “Lushee can work in the night or in the day, and has a bit for her friends and a buffet for her foes. What do ye want with me, Riena?” softening her voice as she addressed Emily; “shall I tell thee thy destiny?” and she cast her *long cut* glittering eyes around, pausing for assistance from her comrades.

“Lushee,” said one of the company, in an under voice, “Riena Burtsee Gurho, Dai a Behee;” and the speaker, evidently not wishing to be understood, or to be heard speaking, by Lady Emily or her companion, turned away to stir a kettle, which, suspended between two sticks, was steaming with savory smell over the fire, and by which sat a venerable-looking man, who ever and anon blew the flame with his breath, and kept feeding it with dried leaves and turf. At the same time, another woman, coming from beneath

the tent, cried—"No rup—sonnikey—sonnikey," and jogged Lushee's elbow.

"Thou art a great lady," continued Lushee, looking intensely at Lady Emily till she coloured again, "and a good lady; I hope no offence, sweet?" smiling and showing her white teeth. "Be not afraid, Lushee will do thee no harm, nor dirty thy pretty pink fingers, though her's be so black. Now dost see, lady, thou wilt have some troubles to go through, and there be many crosses in thy path; thou hast an enemy where thou thinkest thou hast a friend. Hast no friend, lady?" looking up to know if she had guessed right.

"Many, I hope," answered Emily.

"Ah! many is oftentimes worse than none—look carefully, lady sweet, for the adder is under thy threshold; but thou'lt come out of all thy troubles at last: and a great, great lady thou art, and a greater yet shall be. Now put a little silver in Lushee's hand, and I will tell thee a power of fine things." Lady Emily, laughing incredulously, endeavoured to withdraw her hand. "Do not fear!" said the gypsy girl,

“Lushee will do thee no harm, nor stain thy pretty white hand with her brown fingers. Now as I was telling thee—where was I?—thou wilt have some troubles to go through, and there be many crosses in thy path, but thou wilt come out of them all at last. Now put a little silver in the palm of my hand, and I have a great deal more to tell thee. There is a dark lady wishes thee no good, and there is a dark gentleman that loves thee dearly. Do ye now cross my hand with another sixpence, and Lushee will tell thee yet more; I see *the lines plainer under a sixpence.*” And Lushee laughed, displaying the full extent of her pearly teeth.

“I have no silver or gold with me at present,” replied Emily; “but if you will come to the Hall an hour hence, I will pay you handsomely. You know my uncle is always kind to your race.”

“General Montgomery, the good and the brave?” said an aged man coming forward; “ay! that he always was, Lady, and all my race shall bless all his race.—Not a sheaf of his corn or a fowl in his roost was ever the worse for

Corrie Lovel—nor ever shall be. We are poor, and we are wanderers, but we know when to stay our hand, and when to let it drive. Go, Lady, go in peace, and Lushee shall come after you and claim your bounty.”

“Rose, Rose!” called Lady Emily, “let us be gone—I am late.”

But Rose’s senses were so absorbed in listening to the fortune that was predicted to her, that she could not for some time understand Lady Emily’s repeated commands—her eyes were distended beyond their usual size, her cheeks dyed crimson, and her mouth, half apart, seemed to catch the words of the men, who were busily whispering to her. Lady Emily looked distressed.

“Come, Rose! are you bewitched? Come with me quickly.”

“Eleazer,” said Corrie Lovel, “let the girl go directly—let her go, I command thee.”

When Lady Emily and Rose had advanced some way out of sight of the gang, the former said—“I would have given the world that we had not been alone. Hitherto, I have con-

sidered these gipsies to be a harmless race, with nothing but their wandering and wayward life to object against them; but the countenances of some of these were terrific. Oh! I am truly thankful we are safe out of their hands.”

“ La! they be very civil gentry, my Lady, I ’m sure! they told me such surprising things as I never heard in my life. Why, they know all about me, and Ambrose!”

“ And do you wonder at that, Rose? Does not all the village know that he has long wished to have you for his wife? This cunning tribe make it their business to inquire into the histories of every body in and about the place where they sojourn; and if this were all, it were no great harm innocently to apply their knowledge to their calling, and to retail the information they thus gather up, with the addition of such imaginary circumstances as their subtlety and ingenious wit may supply; but to pretend to read the future, to tell seriously what is known to God *alone*, is *wicked*. God only foresees the future, you know—and

how miserable *we* should be, if *we knew* it, the least reflection will show you: it is therefore weak and wrong to indulge in so idle a curiosity, and I am sorry that what I did, partly in fear, partly in joke, should have set you so bad an example."

"But it is very diverting, my Lady, to hear them gipsy folks talk; and who knows but they may tell true sometimes?"

Emily saw that Rose's wishes lent faith to all that had been said to her relative to her future good fortune, and she thought it best not to press the matter further; but quickened her footsteps to return to the Hall, with her spirits flurried by the unforeseen incidents which had disturbed her morning's walk.

As she reached the garden, she found how late it was; and, anticipating the gentle rebuke of her uncle for having missed prayers, waited not to adjust her dress, but flew into the house, flushed with exercise, and all the glow of health blooming on her cheeks, to which her dishevelled ringlets added fresh graces, like the moss

around a beautiful rose. She entered the breakfast-room. There, every person residing at the Hall, except Lady Frances, was assembled. General Montgomery, looking grave, said, "You were not at prayers this morning, my child; were you not well?"

"Oh, quite—*quite* well, dear uncle! and I am ashamed to have no good excuse to offer; but the truth is, the morning was so beautiful, and the hedges were so green and shining, with their patches of May-flower smelling so fragrantly!—and I went to gather some wild violets for you, dear uncle; and then we met some gipsies, for Rose was with me; and then we had our fortunes told—and then, in short, I forgot how the hours flew."

"I went out to gather violets for you," was the sweet part of this speech in General Montgomery's ears, and he pressed her to his heart, kissing her forehead, and saying, "Dearest, best!" Then turning to Miss Macalpine: "Make some fresh tea for Emily, if you please, Miss Macalpine; Lord Mowbray, be so obliging as to touch the bell. Bring some toast for

Lady Emily. Here, my love, are some of the freshest eggs; I charged Fenton to send only those that were laid this morning—they will please even you.”

At this moment Lady Frances entered: her cornette of the finest Brussels lace, her morning-robe of pale lavender silk, her little feet in her little slippers, fresh smiles called up to her vermeil-tinctured lips—the person and its decoration were alike faultless. She approached with a sliding step and an air of studied grace, to her uncle.

“How have you passed the night?” said she
“Dear uncle, I must apologize for being so late, but I have had such a bad head-ache!” and, as she spoke, she poured some *Eau de delices* upon her handkerchief and held it to her temples; then bowed gracefully round the table, and took, or rather sunk into an easy chair.

“I trust you did not catch cold yesterday?” said the General affectionately. “Miss Macalpine, take care of our queen.”

When the bustle of the breakfast-arrange-

ments had subsided, Lady Frances lifted her eyes languidly around; and then, as if for the first time she had discovered that her sister was present, she exclaimed, "Heavens! Emily, what a figure you are! You are not fit to appear—positively indelicate;—pray go and arrange your toilette! Why, there's your collar all torn to pieces, and your bonnet swinging behind your neck like a Billingsgate-woman's,—and your hair! it is quite *decrépè*, hanging about like a Naiad's."

"Poor dear! do not teaze her," said the General; "she is fatigued."

"Really, my uncle is too indulgent!" (and that was true.)

General Montgomery did the reverse of what most other people do:—he constantly practised what he seldom preached. Rebuke, however gentle, was with him an effort; and to give the slightest pain to any person or thing, was of as rare occurrence, as it is for the generality of people to confer pleasure.

"Let me cut you some of this French

loaf;" and he busily cut the bread in delicate slices for Lady Emily; "but where are my violets?" seeing he had thrown them down. Lady Emily was at his feet in a moment, replacing them in his extended hands.

"Delicious!" he said, inhaling their fragrance: "who would be in London that can live in the country?"

Lady Frances looked unutterable things; and Lady Emily replied, "Both are best, dear uncle. I love the country, but town too has its charms."

"Very true, my love, so it has; and particularly for the young and the lovely. What say you, Lord Mowbray?"

"I am quite of Lady Emily's opinion:—both are best." And the business of the moment went on.

"Alpinia," cried Lady Emily, addressing Miss Macalpine thus fancifully, as she was wont to do those with whom she lived in kindly familiarity—"Alpinia, you would have been so delighted if you had been with me this

morning. I shall positively take you by storm to-morrow morning, to Lover's Lane: it is the very place where you might sit and study Madame de Sevigné's Letters, and Fenelon, and Sherlock, and all your favourites. Nay, we might act the gipsy-scenes in Guy Mannering, if you liked. Then, there are whole hives of bees! and you might fancy yourself on Hymettus; and the banks are so green, and the furze so brightly yellow with its musky sweet! quite like one of your own Scotch knowes."

"Ah!" replied Miss Macalpine, rubbing her forefinger, and sighing at the recollection of Scotland, "there 's mony a fair scene, doubtless, in England; but the mountains and the streams of my own dear land, whaur will you see the like?" and she rubbed her finger the harder.

Lady Frances shrugged her shoulders. "And the savages, Miss Macalpine, who animate these fair landscapes?"

"Are just the very grace and ornament of their country; the bravest and the truest! It

suits you ill, Lady Frances, that can boast some Scotch bluid in your veins, to be decrying them. I would not change my own sweet, wild hills, and lone heaths, and misty mountains, for all the

‘ Groves o’ sweet myrtle that foreign lands reckon.’ ”

“ Very right,” rejoined General Montgomery, “ very right, Alpinia! never let them laugh you out of that. I could back your sentiment with many a good ancient proverb. There is no country like our own country, wherever that may be; and it would be well if every body thought so. That is the true way to maintain all things in their proper places.”

“ Mind ye that, Lady Frances?” said Miss Macalpine, turning to her: “ I remember you, Lady Frances, a fine natural wean, when you were no higher than this; but you are not the same: e’en now your fine acquaintance in London, and your twa years in Paris, ha’ na improved you.”

“ What, Alpinia!” rejoined Lady Emily,

taking up the discourse, which she was afraid was assuming too serious a tone, “ have I not heard you say, yourself, that you should like to spend a few weeks at *Fount and Blow* and study the French fashions; the *coiffours* of Monsieur Plaisir, and the *costoomes de Bawl* of Mamselle Catin, and the *chapeaux*, and the *connettes de Dantelle* of the inimitable Madame Herbot?” imitating Miss Macalpine’s, pronunciation of the language.

There was something in the straightforward, *brusque* simplicity of Miss Macalpine, which completely put to the rout Lady Frances’s airs and affectations; and when she had excited, by some flippant or insolent speech, the honest indignation of her old friend, she had no resource but in silent sullenness, or the good-natured interference of her sister. On the present occasion, Lady Emily formed a diversion in her favour, by calling down upon herself the good-humoured wrath of Miss Macalpine; and after some sprightly conversation on French fashions, they rose from breakfast. The General

addressed his friend, Sir Richard Townley, on the subject of extracting thistles and planting lucern; Lord Mowbray gave his arm to Lady Frances, and the whole party dispersed to their several avocations and amusements.

CHAPTER IV.

“O rus, quando te aspiciam! HORACE.

“Blest rural scenes! when may I hope to see
 Your sweet abodes, for ever dear to me;
 Where studious now I turn the classic page,
 Seeking instruction from each distant age:
 Or now indulging vacant, listless hours,
 I court soft slumbers in delicious bowers,
 And in forgetfulness delicious drown
 The cares of anxious life and of the busy town?”

LATE D—— OF A——.

ONE morning, when every object of interest in the neighbourhood seemed to have been exhausted in entertaining their visitor, and no other presented itself, General Montgomery addressed his niece, saying—

“Dearest Emily, has Lord Mowbray yet seen my favourite bower?”

Lord Mowbray bowed, and acknowledged that the bower was one of the beauties of Montgomery Hall not yet revealed to him.

“Well then,” said the General, “your Lordship must see it.—So Emily, haste! equip yourself for the garden.—Who else will be of our party? Frances, my queen, you will go too? Miss Macalpine, Pennington, and the rest.”

General Montgomery had an unfeigned and universal pleasure in every thing connected with the country; his passion was confined to no one particular enjoyment of the numberless sources which a country life opens of happiness and interest; to no one individual object, either of farming, planting, or gardening: of all he was susceptible, to all he alternately directed his attention: thus building up for himself, in these rational pursuits, an endless fabric of happiness and lasting enjoyment. His bower, however, was a favourite *par excellence*; and, perhaps, the more so from the pleasure and trouble Lady Emily took in its decoration and embellishment. Thither he now led the

way, with the eagerness of one who is conscious of paying homage to the taste and fondness of a being dearly cherished by him ; while he was at the same moment indulging his own predilection for the favoured spot.

“Your house, I have observed, General,” said Lord Mowbray, as he turned round and looked at it from the end of the terrace, “is of the Elizabethan style of architecture. How well that style is adapted to our climate, and how connected with our history as a people ! It is to be lamented that so characteristic a taste—a taste, one may say, so perfectly of English growth, and so interwoven with one of our proudest eras, should now-a-days be abandoned for imperfect, garbled imitations of classical beauties ; which at the same time that they are alien to our feelings, are inapplicable both to our skies and our habits, and can never be employed (in our domestic buildings at least,) without losing one chief merit of all architecture, *consistency*. For when we inquire how, in this exotic style of building, our comforts—our true English comforts, are provided for,

we find its adoption destroys them all! The bay-windows, the oaken-wainscotted halls, the large fire-places of our old English mansions, which bring back to our remembrance all the comforts and all the virtues of home-bred growth, are abandoned for the open galleries and porticos, (that lose all use for want of the sun, and all effect for want of light and shade,) and for the large, stuccoed, *scaglioled* and comfortless apartments of the South, which freeze us out of our enjoyments, while they make us shrink at the same time into the insignificance of copyists. I will allow," continued Lord Mowbray, as he stood on the stone steps descending from the terrace to the garden—"I will allow that, in these decorations, we may take a lesson from other countries; and our forefathers did so in adopting the terraced gardens of Italy and France; but then, it is only because the principle of common sense allows it. It is fitting that a mansion should be surrounded with something like ornament; and that we should not step out of a drawing-room exactly into

a turnip-field, or long grass, or straggling wood. A formal parterre, fine vases, and statues lining the long alleys; these evergreen hedges, sheltering the flowers alike from the keen blast and from the sun; these fountains, playing on each side of this decorated scene; and the sun-dial in the midst, are all in unison with the vicinity of man's habitation; and though perhaps roses bloom not here, as Virgil tells us they did in the Ausonian land, twice in every year; yet, when they do put forth, and the sun shines upon us, the whole is harmonious and in keeping."

Thus did Lord Mowbray descant on the subject of taste—a subject always dear to him, and on which he loved to dwell: if only that it brought back to his recollection the countries where he had first imbibed its truest principles. Unlike the generality of virtuosos, however, his enthusiasm for the productions of a peculiar people, or a particular style of art, did not blind him to excellence when found elsewhere: and as he had studied the question of taste *par principe*, so he was

enabled to apply the instruction which a consideration of the monuments of ancient art afforded to practical purposes, even under totally different circumstances.

General Montgomery listened with delight to sentiments so closely in affinity with his own; and his concurrence with all that Lord Mowbray advanced, appeared in the deep and uninterrupted attention which he paid to him while speaking, and by the smile of delight which lit up and animated his features.

The only impatient listener on the occasion was Lady Frances, who had reckoned upon nothing to compensate her for the ennui of the walk, but Lord Mowbray's attentions. These she had hitherto succeeded in engrossing entirely to herself; and mortified now at his seeming indifference, and at the interest which he displayed on other subjects, she resolved to attract his notice by attacking the opinions advanced by him, though ignorant of, as well as indifferent to the subject. Taking up the question, therefore, as a means of drawing his attention, but her pique at the same time not allowing

her to address Lord Mowbray personally, she passed her arm through the General's, and leaning languidly towards him, said—

“ Dear uncle, don't be affronted ; but do you know, that if I could do what I liked, this terrace should be levelled into a fine green slope ; I would have tufts of trees here and there ; the river should be blocked up, to form a large sheet of water at the bottom of the valley, and——”

“ That is, Frances,” interrupted the General, “ these sunny, terraced banks, and this court of Flora, mutually enhancing each other's beauties ; that stream, which murmurs so harmoniously as it ripples and dashes over its stony bed ; should be turned into the dullest of all dull things—a large, green English park, with an oval pond in the midst, conveniently placed to reflect back the surrounding insipidity. That is what you mean, Frances, is it not ?”

“ Certainly, dearest uncle, a park in itself is a dull, monotonous thing ; but, you know, if these high screens of evergreens were removed, we should obtain a view of the high road, and the

carriages passing. And then, if the old beech avenue was cut down, and the road wound round and round, instead of going straight as a dart up to the Hall, the effect would be charming; and the visitors, as they approached, would be so agreeably surprised!"

"At being taken miles out of their way in reaching their destination, Frances, I suppose?" said the General.

"No, but, dear uncle, I am serious; it *would* be a great improvement. I have been reading a book upon landscape gardening lately, and I assure you I am quite *au fait* at these things. And in getting rid of those old trees, with their bare roots, we should get rid of all these cawing rooks, that really make noise enough, morning and evening, to deafen one's ears, and depress one's spirits—mine, at least."

General Montgomery heard the proposed improvements patiently enough, considering how unwelcome they were to him even in idea; but to have actually seen the minutest alteration, would have put all his gentle philosophy to its severest test. In age, the love of natural and

inanimate objects becomes stronger than in youth; they are, perhaps, the last remaining associates of earlier days of happiness, when the companions we have loved are no more, or are divided from us by absence, or, what is worse, are changed; or have proved, it may be, unworthy of the affections lavished upon them: but the trees and shrubs and flowers planted by us, thrive, and repay our care; cheer us with their ever renovating beauty, and impart, as it were, their youthful vigour to our declining feebleness. The very chair we have been accustomed to, receives us still with unchanging kindness; *le fauteuil qui nous tend les bras*, assumes the character of friend whom we have invested with all our feeling and thoughts, and who promises to us an assurance of sympathy and comfort that will be unaltered to the end.

These were so truly General Montgomery's feelings, that he may well be supposed to have writhed under Lady Frances's enumeration of improvements; and had his gentle spirit ever suffered him to utter a severe reproof, it would have been called forth in the present instance;

but he preserved silence, signifying his dissent, as she ceased speaking, only by a mournful shake of the head and a look of regret.

A pause ensued, for Lord Mowbray seemed unwilling to accept the challenge covertly offered by Lady Frances, while addressing her uncle ; and Lady Frances, on her part, disappointed in the object she had proposed by speaking at all, appeared reluctant to join further in the conversation. The good General was unwilling to allow the question at issue, however, to end thus abruptly ; and, ever anxious to think in unison with those he loved, sought some point to concede. “ I think you are right, Frances, about those rooks,” he said, interrupting the silence ; “ but what can I do ? would you have them shot ? ”

“ Shot ! ” exclaimed Lady Emily, eagerly ; “ oh, no ; I beseech you, dear uncle, do not have any of them shot : only drive them away.”

“ Why, Emily, you remind me of a gentle friend of mine, whose premises were overrun by rats, but who could never be persuaded to destroy them ; till at last, wearied with the

complaints of servants, and finding that the plea which he always urged, of there being room enough in the world both for himself and the rats too availed nothing, he consented to a removal of the obnoxious visitors. And this was, at length, accomplished by carrying many sacks-full to a neighbouring common; where, released from their temporary captivity, they were left to live out their little day of life unmolested, at least by him. "It is a pity," said the General, as he concluded, "that this gentleness of soul will not bear reasoning upon, for one cannot choose but love it."

"Love it! yes," cried Lady Emily; "but are there not some things, dearest uncle, which it would be wicked to reason upon, and as wicked not to love? and surely this gentleness you speak of is one of them."

General Montgomery gave one of his fondest looks of admiration and affection, as he pressed Lady Emily's hand in his own, saying, "*Et sa deraison, fussiez vous Caton, auroit l'art de vous plaire.*"

"Well!" said Lady Frances, scornfully, "we

seem to have got tolerably far from the first question; we began with a disquisition on taste, and are ending with a disquisition on rats:” and, forgetting the reserve she had assumed towards Lord Mowbray, she asked—“ Pray, my Lord, what is your opinion of modern improvements? for I think we should end one subject before we begin another. Emily and her rats can wait. What do you think?”

“ Think!” said Lord Mowbray, half starting from a reverie into which he had fallen,—“ about what?”

“ About taste.”

“ What a question! Do you expect me to discuss, in a word, a subject which has filled volumes? I know what pleases myself—that is, I believe I do—sometimes.”

“ Well,” interrupted the General, “ before you go further, Frances, in questioning Lord Mowbray on this subject, I think you are yourself bound to give us a definition of taste. I have my suspicions, however, that you confound it with fashion, though they are two very different things; and, therefore, before you enter

the lists, I will read you a little disquisition on these two words. It pleased me extremely yesterday, when I met with it in one of the Magazines; I have it in my pocket."

The party having reached the General's bower, and having arranged themselves beneath its shady roof, he read to them as follows:—

FASHION AND TASTE.

Fashion and Taste were sisters, but so very opposite in their characters, appearance, and manners, that few persons could suppose them to bear any relationship to each other.

Fashion was light, airy, agreeable; but changeable as the camelion. Taste was grave, gentle, unobtrusive, and required to be courted and drawn out in order to be understood and appreciated. Fashion swayed like a capricious tyrant where she obtained rule. Taste maintained her power by gentle but convincing arguments; the more she was known the better she was loved; invariable in her modes and

expressions, she had recourse to no extraneous allurements from novelty, but held on the even tenour of her way: from the most sublime to the most humble topic which came under her cognizance, she reasoned alike with a noble simplicity, and formed her own judgment without arrogance, yet without any subserviency to the trivial opinions of the day.

It is strange, however, to say, that notwithstanding the acknowledged and established precedence of Taste—for nobody would be supposed incapable of paying her all manner of deference;)—notwithstanding this, when the two sisters, Taste and Fashion, appeared in public, Fashion would almost always take the lead, while Taste was frequently seen to be abstracted from the busy scene, musing alone, in quiet, graceful contemplation, on the passing throng. At times, Fashion, struck by the native charm which played around her sister, would fly to her arms, and walk by her side. When this was the case, she caught, in despite of herself, a reflection from the graces

of Taste, and for the moment became irresistible ; but, as it was merely caprice which induced her to seek this companionship, so it ended as quickly on her part in wearisomeness and disgust ; and from her sickly appetite, which was ever in quest of change, she would hasten indiscriminately from better to worse in pursuit of novelty, sacrificing every thing to the gratification of that, her ruling passion. Taste, on the contrary, with a few judicious exceptions, generally leaned to whatever had been sanctioned by Time ; not that she was a servile imitator, even of the ancients, but that she defended her deference to them upon their being followers of Nature, and because concurrent opinion and the judgment of mankind had strengthened and confirmed their choice.

Fashion, on her part, laughed openly, or sneered maliciously, at every thing which was more than nine days old ; and though sometimes, as if in mockery, she approached the shrine of antiquity, she never did so without putting on the mask of her sister Taste—a

device which failed in deceiving long, and which terminated invariably in her own exposure. Nevertheless, Fashion succeeded, at last, in putting her sister in the back-ground, and gained complete rule over the multitude.

Taste, however, showed no ill-temper at this defeat; neither did she envy her sister's success: she did not forsake the world altogether in disgust, because she was frequently eclipsed in it; neither did she lose her own identity by a too constant admixture therewith, but would occasionally retire to scenes of perfect seclusion, to cultivate and indulge her own pure and noble pursuits.

In fine, with that true spirit of gentleness and humility which particularly characterizes her, she never quarrelled with Fashion, though her sister was constantly at variance with her; but was ever ready to receive and to accompany her, whenever her countenance and support were solicited.

This, however, occurred so very rarely, and the union proved always of such brief duration,

that, finally, Taste could place no trust in its stability; and those only who had the courage to depart from the multitude and adhere to her side, uninfluenced by her versatile sister, ever expected or ever were peculiarly distinguished by her.

“ I hate,” said Lady Frances, peevisly, “ to be cheated into any thing; and those tiresome allegories always appear to me to be such a stale contrivance: stories are quite different stories, according as they are told. Now, my dear Sir, if I were to relate an apologue upon the subject which you have just given us, I would relate it thus :—‘ Fashion was a young, gay, delightful creature, who never frowned or prosed; and her sister, *Good Taste*, loved her so much, that they were inseparable——’ In short, (only it is too much trouble,) I could carry on the whole history, if I chose it, in the contrary strain; and end by drawing an inference the

very reverse of that which is made by your book.”

General Montgomery smiled at the ingenuity of his unpersuadable niece; and then turning to his own loved Emily, he said, “ You, best and dearest, will enter into my delight at this little fable, which I conceive to be the fairest possible excuse for, or, rather I should say, the strongest argument in favour of my sun-dial, my fountains, and my yew-hedges. Whatever modern innovation may suggest, there is certainly no true taste in converting the immediate vicinity of a gentleman’s house into a bare jejune field, with a few clumps of trees sprinkled over it, and no reason either. Our climate always demands shelter, sometimes shade, and you have both in these noble evergreen screens which protect my flowers alternately from wind and heat, while my fountains glitter in the beams of the sun, and show like liquid diamonds; or, when the softer splendour of the moon rests upon them, they form a silvery sheet of falling light. Then my sun-dial, in the midst of my parterre,

that tells me what life itself is made of—a sun-beam and a shade. Who can say that these varied objects are not much more replete with taste and feeling than the irriguous gravel-walks in an unmeaning shrubbery, or the out-spread, unfurnished monotony of a grass park? There are countries where the gigantic features of Nature may of themselves supersede all other interest; but even there, as I myself have witnessed, the immediate vicinity of the dwelling-place is decorated with appropriate objects of home-felt enjoyment. To a true lover of the country, every one of these becomes an attaching interest, and seems gifted with more power than that which is vested in mere abstract nature, when devoid of the care and decoration bestowed by man. That pine” (pointing to one which grew over their heads) “was planted by me thirty years ago; and, now that it seems to support and cherish the blossoms of that rich red lilac that grows by its side, I please myself with fancying (you know I am fond of emblems and resemblances) that I trace in them an analogy to you, my dear nieces, and myself:

—the pine is in a green old age ; and the lilac, young, blossoming, beautiful, and hopeful.”

Lady Emily pressed his arm delightedly, in token of grateful and answering feeling ; while something like a smile of derision curled her sister’s lip, as she turned away, and observed to Lord Mowbray, that “ all that was a great deal too fine for her !”

What would have been Lord Mowbray’s reply it is difficult to say ; for, agreeing in every word that had fallen from General Montgomery, he stood in the dilemma of either forfeiting his own consistency, or still farther offending Lady Frances by continuing to differ from her. Fortunately, he was rescued at that moment by Lady Emily’s soliciting him to listen to some verses, inscribed on a tablet in the bower, to which she directed his attention. “ They are a paraphrase of my dear uncle’s from Horace,” said she, “ and as you are doubtless familiar with the original lines, Lord Mowbray, you will be capable of appreciating the delicacy with which they are rendered ; as to myself, I can only feel the touching beauty of their senti-

ment. Will you listen while I read?"—and Lady Emily with a feeling and a tone of voice that gave an additional charm to her words, read from the tablet the following lines, the idea of which was taken from Horace's "Beatus ille."

"Happy the man, who far from worldly care—
Free from its passions, like primeval man—
Tills the paternal field of which he's heir,
And thus in peace fulfils his little span!

Who never wakens to the fearful sound
Of warlike trumpet—whom the angry main
With tempests scares not—with whom peace is found—
Who lives and dies upon his native plain.

Who flies the bar litigious, scorns the great;
Whom rural sports and rural cares employ;
Who binds his vine unto his poplar's fate,
And prunes their shoots, the clust'ring fruit t' enjoy.

Now sees his grazing herds, in valley lone,
On richest pasture feed in quiet dell;
And while their loves they court with lowing moan,
Gathers his honey from its waxen cell.

When matron Autumn, crowned with fruit, appears,
He culls the blushing grapes or juicy pears;
Then to the Sylvan gods an altar rears
That best his rural gratitude declares.

Now under covert of some plantain's shade,
Cast on the youthful grass of tender green,
His careless limbs to soft repose are laid,
While all conspires to deck the quiet scene.

The fountains murmur with a lulling sound
To the soft music of the tribes of air,
Inviting slumber, which, with poppies crown'd,
To soft oblivion soothes the sons of care.

But when stern Jupiter the storm commands,
With howling Winter to revisit earth,
And binds in icy chains the frozen lands,
Then changing pleasure owns a novel birth.

Caught in the toil, the tusked boar groans loud ;
Or on the polished wood the net is placed,
Th' epicurean thrushes to enshroud,
Or timid hare to catch, by snare embraced.

Who that enjoys these rural sports can know
The worldly pains which vex with constant strife :
How blest he is, whose tranquil moments flow
Calm and unruffled down the stream of life !

But if, mid these, a chaste and virtuous wife,
Scorning the sunbeam which embrowns her cheek,
With household business plies her useful life,
What have poor mortals more on earth to seek ?

At night, when he returns, she trims the fire ;
Safe to the fold his fleecy flocks are brought ;
With this year's wine she fills the goblet higher,
And spreads his board with viands never bought

Neither with oysters from the Lucrine lake,
 Nor scarfish, that unusual tempests bore
 From where the eastern ocean billows break,
 Ev'n to the margin of our distant shore;

No woodland grouse, nor yet Numidian fowl,
 Nor all the delicacies ever sought,
 So sweet would taste, as in his wooden bowl
 Sorrel and olives from his pasture brought.

See the tired oxen, with a lagging pace ;
 The plough inverted, and the sheep demure ;
 The farming menials, too, a numerous race,
 At night returning, taste of rest secure.

What real joy this tranquil life to lead !
 Of worldly cares to take a last farewell !
 To rural scenes, till number'd with the dead,
 I fly ; and there for evermore shall dwell."

"Now, Emily," said General Montgomery, "you have inflicted enough on Lord Mowbray ; spare his Lordship the necessity of any flattering encomiums on my doggerel, and lead the way home."

"Indeed, General, my praise would be most sincere, did you not forbid its utterance ; and its sincerity is, I fear, its only value : although I should grow less diffident of my

judgment, had I always the happiness, as in the present instance, of agreeing with Lady Emily.”

Lord Mowbray, who meant nothing beyond politeness to the General and his niece on the subject of his verses, perceived that his last remark had been interpreted by Lady Frances to refer to the former conversation on the terrace; and now feeling herself not only neglected, but pointedly reproved by Lord Mowbray, she with difficulty concealed the mortification she experienced.

A servant from the Hall, met the party on their return with a note, which Lady Emily bounded forward to receive; for when is not a note an event in the country? To the younger party it conjures up fairy visions of balls and beaux; new dresses, new admirers, and all the long, delightful *etcetera* of a fête. By the elder branches of the family, perhaps, this harbinger of coming events is looked upon with doubt; and the ball, with all its contingent fatigues, should it be a ball, is

to them a matter of apprehension rather than of hope.

It was not thus, however, to General Montgomery. He lived but for his nieces; and their enjoyment was always sure to be his, come in what shape it might. He smiled at his favourite Emily's anxiety to know the contents of the little perfumed *billet doux* which she placed in his hands; and said, as he broke the seal, "What a pity it is that the ardour of youth remains not always with us, and that we lose that keen sense of innocent hope and fears as we grow older! But if it be true, that hope oft dies ere youth has passed its prime, and that experience takes the lead of age, withering the few flowers which grow in life's downward path, it is wise also—" but the good General stopped and suppressed a sigh. "Well, my Emily, what say you? Shall I wait till we reach home, or read the contents of my note here?"

"Oh! dear uncle, you know it requires an answer: the servant waits."

The note was opened, and its contents soon

made known. "Well, Frances! Emily!" said the General, "we are invited to the Fitzhammonds', to their christening. Let me see, when is it to be?—Friday week."

"Oh, I hope you will go, dearest uncle!" said Lady Emily, taking his arm coaxingly—"I hope you will, for there is to be a ball in the evening."

"A ball!" rejoined the General; "why, you seem to know it all beforehand."

"Oh, yes! my maid, Watson, says it is to be the finest thing that ever was seen."

"As all balls are in their turn, I believe," observed Lord Mowbray, smiling.

"Oh, fie!" said Lady Emily, holding up her finger; "I fear you are not fond of dancing; at least, not as I am fond of it,—for dancing's sake."

"As for me," said Lady Frances, "I really feel no anxiety to make my appearance at such a cake and caudle affair. I suppose, all the plebeians of the town are invited. The apothecary, the attorney, and all the other genteel

vulgar. Mercy ! It is alarming to one's nerves to think of such an assemblage ! And as to Mrs. Fitzhammond's pale, vacant face, that will be no amusement to me ; and then all the strange melange, of what she calls *people of talent*, whom she pays to flatter her,—Heaven protect me from such a set !”

“ But there will be a ball, and somebody must be there to dance,” said Lady Emily.

“ Oh, yes !—what do you think of Mr. Kimbolton, who prances through a quadrille as if he had sworn the destruction of one's trimming ? or Mr. Higglesworth, who says, ‘ Yes, Ma'am,’ and ‘ If you please, my Lady ;’ or Sir John Marsden, who has a regular catechism at his fingers-end for all the pauses in the figure : ‘ How do you do ? how is your uncle ? where is your cousin ? how is your aunt ? how is Lady A—— ? Mrs. B—— ? Miss C—— ?’—Ah ! Heaven defend me from a country ball !”

“ Frances,” rejoined the General, with something more of asperity in the tone of his voice

than was usual, “there are many kinds of excellence in the world, and many sorts of virtues. I hold charity to be the chief among the latter: and if Mrs. Fitzhammond’s pursuits and manners, and her style of company, are not exactly to your taste; if they are not excellences in your eyes; remember, she possesses many good sterling qualities, which, if they were more universally and better appreciated, the world would be better than it is. She is a good wife, a fond mother, a friend to the poor; and, as they tell me, very well informed, and capable of valuing the talents of those persons whom the ample fortune of her husband enables her to bring around her. So you see, my dear Frances, I can make as different a story of the subject of Mrs. Fitzhammond as you would have done of my allegory; and now then that we are even, dearest, we will go, and I am sure you will wear your brightest smiles.”

“Oh! thank you, dear, dear uncle!” said Lady Emily.

“ I hope your Lordship will not refuse ?” said the General.

“ By no means !” replied Lord Mowbray, as he bowed assent to the General’s wishes.

In the meanwhile, the party continued their way to the hall ; and Lady Emily, in all the gaiety of youthful spirits, kept dancing on before her uncle, as he slowly paced the terrace.

“ Emily,” said General Montgomery, “ the very idea of this ball has made you quite wild ; though, I really believe, you would dance with a post, if it could move, rather than not dance at all ; and it is quite right and natural, dearest ! I never hear good music but my dancing-days come back to me in their original joyousness ; and I should certainly dance forthwith, were it not that it would suit ill with an old General to be twirling about like a tetotum. Eh ! Pennington, you are younger than I am ; why do you not join Emily ?”

By this time they had reached the library-window. The General entered to write his

answer to the invitation, and the different parties paired off, Lady Frances being the only one among them who appeared dissatisfied with the arrangements and amusements of the morning.

CHAPTER V.

“ Yet scarcely can I throw a smile on things
So painful, but that, Time his comfort brings,
Or rather throws oblivion on the mind ;
For we are more forgetful, than resigned.”

CRABBE'S TALES OF THE HALL.

THE party at the Hall, had sought (throughout the day) their own peculiar amusements, and, in the liberty which was professedly allowed to its inmates, each individual had planned some little project of gratification, independent of the rest of the world around them. The General had been occupied with his agents, whose smiling faces and profuse compliments and allusions to their employer's fortune, as

they sat down to the hospitable board, evinced how well they were satisfied with the prospect of his affairs. They were, in consequence, in a state of more than usual obsequiousness and garrulity through the dinner; but how difficult is it for vulgar and grovelling spirits to conceal the cause of their self-gratulation! they are betrayed even by the effort, amiable enough in itself, of overstrained anxiety to please!

The next to them in self-complacency (yet how different the cause from whence that complacency sprung!) was Lady Emily. Her morning had been spent in visits to the poor around the General's estate, to *all* of whom she was a friend; to many a mother and benefactress. Rose Delvin, who was at once her almoner and companion in these progresses of charity, had carried with her, various comforts for the sick and infirm; clothes and food for the more indigent; and, above all, she herself dispensed those gentle words of kindly interest, which cheer the sick and the suffering, and are in every one's power to bestow in a degree,

although it is given to few to join the angel's manner with the angel's mind.

Miss Macalpine appeared in the circle the same as usual ; her daily routine of reading and writing, intermingled with certain tunes on the violin, which she had been practising for thirty years ; (her adoption of this instrument was occasioned by a compliment which had been paid to her when young :—she had been told either in jest or earnest, that she resembled the angel which, in one of *Rafaelle's* famous pictures, is represented playing on a violin ;) and this singular amusement, with the never-failing resource of *Madame de Sevigné*, made her day glide by to her own satisfaction ; nor were her days always confined to self-amusement ; she frequently joined *Lady Emily* in her charitable rounds, and assisted, with her means, the schemes which the latter was constantly planning for the benefit of the distressed.

Lord Townley, *Colonel Pennington*, and *Sir Richard Townley*, all wore the smile of self-complacency ; we will not say all from the same

source; and Lady Frances was still the only one who appeared dissatisfied. There had been no new visitors at the hall. Lord Mowbray did not pay her the homage she required, or show himself inclined to attend her in the promenades she had proposed to the conservatories or flower-gardens. In short

“Where none are beaux, 'tis vain to be a belle.”

And this alone was sufficient to stamp that sullen expression on her countenance which deforms beauty's self; while the contrast of the joyous contentment which shone out on her sister Lady Emily's features, lent them that ineffable power to charm which diffused itself into the very hearts of all beholders.

The dinner past, the rubber played, the music performed—though (owing to Lady Frances, or to the instrument being out of tune,) not so brilliantly as was its wont; one by one, the company dropped off to their respective apartments, and Colonel Pennington found himself alone with Lord Mowbray. Lord

Mowbray commenced the conversation by asking who that odd old woman, Miss Macalpine, was.

“Imagine to yourself, my dear Pennington—I met her to-day by accident in the garden, and she volunteered me her good advice, telling me that I ought to direct my energies and my capacities (I never knew I had any) to some useful end. Her singleness of mind, mingled as it is with much shrewd sense, and rendered more amusing by her national accent, makes her a very diverting person; but why she should take it upon herself to lecture me, I cannot divine!

“Ay, poor soul!” replied the Colonel, shaking his head; “doubtless she feels an interest in you, though it must be of a painful kind. She was well acquainted with your kinsman, the late Lord, to her misfortune; and she still loves every thing and every person connected with him.”

“How so? was there any flirtation between them in those days before the flood?”

“Humph!” groaned the Colonel. “Flirtation is one word for certain conduct in a man, but you must pardon me if I call it by another. It is altogether a sad story, and I would rather forget it. So saying, he gulped down his glass of wine and water which stood on the supper tray.

“Come,” cried Lord Mowbray, with more eagerness than he was wont to display, “let me know how they carried on these affairs thus long ago? Pretty much as they do now, I suppose? So my coz made a fool of Miss Marian Macalpine?”

“He made a villain of himself!” replied the Colonel, in his loudest tone, and striking the table with his clenched fist. “Yes, I will tell you the story: for it may make you sensible that the false acceptation of a word may lead to very fatal consequences; and that though honour has practically in the world a wide difference in its meaning, as applied to the conduct of men towards women, or in respect to each other,—nevertheless that it does not

change its original sense or alter its nature, however much fashionable vice may disguise the one or subvert the other."

"I am all attention," replied Lord Mowbray, settling himself in the midst of a large sofa, surrounded by cushions;—"pray begin."

Colonel Pennington hemmed loudly, and spoke as follows:—

"The late Lord Mowbray became very early in life master of himself, as the phrase goes—that is to say, master of every means most likely to render a man the slave of himself as well as of others. He was brought up to no profession: and had no determinate pursuit—the greatest mistake that any one can make in the regulation of early habits; and from the erring fondness of a weak mother, he was left to the management of servants, and learnt nothing farther but what they called to be manly, which meant to bring down a bird, hunt a badger, or earth a fox-hole. One day, his mother came into the room where an un-

fortunate governess (for he had a governess till he was ten years old) was attempting to teach him to write, and he was kicking and striving to overturn the table on her legs: ‘Why do you torment the boy so? if he does not like to do his lesson now, he will do it another time; and if he never does it, it does not much signify, he will always have somebody to do it for him!’

“This one anecdote will develope to you the whole course of his early education. It chanced, however, that nature had given him talents of a higher order; and although the conversation and sports of Will the huntsman and Dick the gamekeeper sufficed to his boyish days, he felt their inadequacy to his ripening years, and became disgusted with such communion—a disgust much increased by his forming an acquaintance with a very superior woman a few years older than himself, but one whose influence and natural good sense opposed itself to these degrading pursuits, and contributed to save him from the fatal love of low and illiterate society; a habit, which once form-

ed, fails not to lower and debase the man; and to encourage in him the growth of all the worst and most sensual propensities of his nature. I have heard people say, when speaking of characters, who have fallen into this error,—‘ Oh ! he’s a fine fellow that ! he is not proud : he speaks to Jem this, and Jack t’other, just as free as if they were of his own class !’ but such persons are much deceived in attributing to these men the qualities which they think constitute ‘ *a good fellow* !’ I have never seen such a domineering spirit in any class of society as is to be found in those whose associates are beneath them in rank, intellect, and education : men who habitually live with low company, enjoy only the companionship of such as they can with impunity bully, or turn into ridicule. I have myself known some individuals, the most exalted in station, and most distinguished by the gifts of nature, who have become a prey to this fatal love of mixing in the society of the low and vicious part of mankind, and I have invariably found in them the same tyrannical and overbearing disposition. From this incur-

able habit, my friend, your kinsman, was however saved in time, and chiefly by the intimacy he formed with Miss Marian Macalpine!"

"What!" said Lord Mowbray, "this identical Miss Macalpine?"

"The very same!" rejoined Colonel Pennington:—"When the late Lord Mowbray was about sixteen years old, his mother retired to her native Scotland: she was one of those tranquil characters, apparently, which passed for gentleness personified to all who did not know her intimately; but to those who did, she appeared in her true colours: very meek and very positive; foolish and obstinate withal as any mule. Without being servile, Marian Macalpine was an indispensable person in her establishment; one whose presence was never obtrusively felt, but whose absence was acknowledged as a blank by every creature in the family; the proverb of 'a favourite has no friend,' was reversed in her favour: she *was* a favourite, and every one was *her friend*. Were any sick, Marian attended them night and day; were any domestic arrangements to

be made, nobody executed them so well or so willingly as Marian. In the midst of all this circumstantial activity in every-day concerns, there were hours when this girl stole time to improve herself by reading, and cultivating many little accomplishments; and she afterwards turned these acquirements to profit. Her enthusiasm for every thing that was noble, roused the young Lord Mowbray's dormant qualities; and oftentimes, as we rowed about on the neighbouring loch, for I was a frequent inmate there, she would take an opportunity of speaking of the military glory of our country, or the fame of its patriots and statesmen, till we both kindled at her words; and to these early impressions may be attributed the different walks which we afterwards pursued in life."

"You interest me greatly," said Lord Mowbray; "pray go on."

"The career which I chose," continued the Colonel, "led me sooner away from home: but as I occasionally returned to Heatherden, and spent some months at a time there, I had opportunities of seeing and appreciating

the sterling good qualities, and of admiring the sweet and lovely person of Marian, till my affections were engaged deeper than I believed them to be : then, and then only, were my eyes completely opened ; and, long before it was known to themselves, I knew that Marian's life was bound up in Lord Mowbray's : I foresaw many obstacles to their union ; but I was also aware that, provided he remained steady to his purpose, nothing could ultimately prevent her becoming his wife : and this thought subdued my pretensions, and left only an affection like a brother's love, which has never changed : poor soul ! it has been, I believe, often her only consolation !”

Here the good Colonel paused, and had recourse to a replenishment of his glass before he proceeded ; during which, Lord Mowbray instinctively gave utterance to his astonishment at the recital he had been listening to.

“ Strange, passing strange,” he said, “ that I should have met the person here, and at this particular time ! Did you know that she was an inmate at the Hall ?”

The Colonel, too intent on his own thoughts, without replying directly to these questions, went on: “The Minister’s manse (Marian’s paternal home) was nearly a mile from Heatherden; Lord Mowbray always accompanied her to and from her father’s, and frequently I was one of the party. Those were happy hours; we were innocent and gay creatures: but while I please myself with lingering thus on my story, perhaps I weary you.”

“Not at all,” replied Lord Mowbray, with greater earnestness than his manner usually expressed; endeavouring (for people sometimes will try to conceal their better feelings) to hide, under an apparent lightness of manner, the deep interest he took in the story;—“not at all, I assure you; it is very amusing to know how people managed their Flirtations forty years ago.”

“Humph!” ejaculated the Colonel, between a sigh and a groan: and then continued—“At length, the time came when Lord Mowbray’s guardians thought it necessary to send him on his travels. I was surprised to observe that he seemed overjoyed at the idea of leaving home;

and now I should almost wish to read them to you. In most cases, this would be a breach of confidence; but years are gone by, and, in truth, the letters do honour to the writer; they may take effect upon you too. But it is growing late, and we had better separate now. Some other day," he added, "I will resume my story; to-morrow, perhaps, should nothing intervene; for the papers I allude to are in Montgomery's charge, to whom I consigned them, since Miss Macalpine has become a resident in his house, to be delivered to her in the event of my death, if I die before her; and if not, to be destroyed. To destroy them myself, I felt was impossible; for they are too interesting, and do too much justice to an injured woman, to suffer me to consign them to oblivion; besides, I am now doubly glad they are in existence, since I have it in my power to communicate their contents to yourself—a circumstance which, on all accounts, is satisfactory to me."

"Pray, let me see them," said Lord Mowbray, with great earnestness; "I beg you will.

—Love letters forty years old must be interesting ; Flirtations of the last century, a pleasant sort of old-fashioned comedy.”

“ A tragedy say rather, and you will speak more truly.”

“ Perhaps so,” answered Lord Mowbray with a stifled sigh ; and he passed his hand over his brow to hide the feeling, which contracted it for a moment.

The Colonel did not answer, but, lighting his taper, bade him good-night. “ We shall be alone again to-morrow evening,” he said, coming back into the room.

“ I hope so,” rejoined Lord Mowbray ; and they separated for the night.

The next evening however, and the next, passed away ; and still Colonel Pennington did not resume the subject ; and Lord Mowbray, on whom the recital of Miss Macalpine’s story had made a peculiarly strong impression, thought that the promise of affording him a perusal of the letters connected with it had been forgotten, or on a maturer consideration withheld, and

from motives of delicacy, therefore, he refrained from any observation upon the subject.

On the third subsequent night, he again found himself alone with Colonel Pennington; who, starting from his chair, as he perceived they were once more by themselves, said abruptly, "Mowbray, are you inclined to listen to any of the letters I alluded to a few evenings ago?"

"Oh, certainly!" replied Lord Mowbray; and then rallying again all the mingled interest and curiosity he had felt on the subject, added,— "Oh, by all means; it is just the kind of stimulus I require at this moment: pray let me see them; that is, if you will entrust them to me for perusal."

"No, not for perusal. I cannot entrust them to any one for perusal," said Colonel Pennington, half audibly to himself; and then added, "I will *read* them to you, Mowbray."

So saying, he left the room, and soon returned with a curious casket of walnut-wood, covered with brass ornaments, to the handle of which

was affixed, in a sealed paper, the key of the box. The Colonel tore away the envelope containing the key, and applied it to the lock, which was one of old and foreign manufacture, and at length opened the casket; from whence, breathing high, he took one or two packets of letters; then paused as if summoning up resolution, and was about to begin reading aloud; but, laying the papers down again, he looked around—“Every body is gone to bed, I think; I should not like that we were overheard:” and he rose from his seat to examine if the doors were carefully closed.

“Leave that window open, at least,” said Lord Mowbray; “for they have made so great a fire, that I shall be stifled before I have time to be sentimental.”

“No one can listen there, for it is too high from the ground,” rejoined the Colonel; “and so now attend. I begin with Marian’s first letter to Lord Mowbray, after his leaving her:” and drawing a deep breath, he commenced reading:—

“The house has been unco waelike since you

gied awa'. It is now a week syne, for yesterday was the Lord's Day; and in the kirk my father prayed for the noble family connected with thae bounds, and the safe return of the leddy's son frae foreign parts: had it na been for this, I should think it a long year, foreby a week, since you said 'Farewell, my Marian!' When you were gone, I gied up to the burnside and sat me down by the stream; but, in its gurgling, I heard the sound of your voice alane, and I jumped up and ran off to the Craig point and luiked as far as my eye could see; and there was a wee crimson cloud that followed the course o' the setting sun, and glinted upon the vera spot where I lost sight o' you; and I luiked upon it wi' pleasure, and thought in my silly heart that it shone prophetic o' your brilliant fortune; but even that did na comfort me! When you were present, I could think wi' pleasure, wi' pride, o' the height you were surely born to attain, and of all the fame and the glory I wished might be yours; but now you are awa', I can only think o' yoursel', such as you are now, and

feel how little there is in thae high aspirations to comfort me for your loss !'

“ Lord Mowbray,” observed the Colonel, “ was going to a court-ball when he received the above touching letter. He threw it to me with a careless air as he buckled on his sword ; and then, casting a look at his person in a long mirror, passed away to the amusements of the night : but there were more serious circumstances surrounding him to banish all remembrance of poor Marian. The brilliancy of the foreign Court, and the stirring excitement of the times, the novelty of the whole scene, and the success he met with personally, completely turned his head. In the midst of this vortex, the deep but quiet purity of the heart’s eloquence had little chance of being heard ; Marian’s constancy and her letters became irksome to him ; and one day he said to me, ‘ Tom, I wish you would take this tiresome correspondence off my hands. I have written but seldom, and still she writes as often as before. I expected reproaches—I almost wished for them ; but since none arrive, I have no excuse for quarrelling :

yet still, to allow this to go on is impossible. The fact is, you know it was a very innocent *flirtation* for the highlands of Scotland; but for both our sakes it is better ended now.' 'It had better never have begun then, my Lord,' I replied, with indignation. 'May be so; but it is not my fault if the girl mistook a few common attentions for a serious passion; neither am I to blame if she is not wise enough, now that she sees her mistake, to cure herself of the folly.' 'All follies are not easily cured, even when we are sensible they are follies,' I said. He waited not to listen, but was off on some quest of novel amusement. Many months lapsed away, and I was called to other scenes. Lord Mowbray received accounts from his guardians, that his mother was very ill—dangerously so. A second letter, yet more pressing, was followed by a third; stating that, if he wished to see his parent before she died, he must hasten to her. This roused him to his duty, and he returned to Heatherden. A letter which I received from him some time after will show you how much presence and

place influence some characters: the first part is relative to some extraneous affairs; the latter is the sentence I wish to read to you—ay, let me see; here it is:

“ ‘ I know not, Tom, how it is; but as I approached this scene of early love, the impressions so long effaced, or rather so concealed and choked up, seemed to start before me like a picture newly brought by a skilful hand from the dust and decay into which it has fallen. The freshness of young life itself seemed to return as I breathed the mountain air; and I awoke as from a feverish dream. My mother’s illness has most unexpectedly taken a favourable turn; I have leisure to think, and inclination to think seriously. Marian’s ripened beauty is more captivating than ever: unlike indeed is she, the mountain nymph, to the courtly beauties with whom I have been lately captivated; but in her natural graces I read a thousand endearing qualities of the heart, while in theirs, I remember only the factitious airs of tutored coquetry.—Yes, I am determined Marian shall be my wife.’

“When I read this letter,” continued the Colonel, “mixed feelings arose in my breast; but yet I felt, and I said, ‘Thank heaven! it is so!’ Some time after, I received another line from your kinsman: here it is; I have kept them all, that I may never put too much trust in man again: here is this next letter—

“ ‘Marian expressed to me the other day her piercing sorrow when she found her letters were no longer answered by me in regular course. ‘She was,’ she said, ‘more grieved on my account even than on her own; for to forget her so soon, who had been the playmate of my young days, and the friend of her early childhood, argued a light mind; but she went on to say, in her northern phrase, which from her sounds so naïve and so sweet, ‘Let us never mair speak o’ thae things, ye had mony matters doubtless to tak’ up your attention; whereas Marian had only to think o’ you, and now ye are just the same again, and a’ is right.’ Thus you see, Tom, I am just now where I was, as Marian expressed it, only that I am come to the resolution that Marian shall be my wife;

but I cannot undergo all the violence of my mother's temper; her health too is in a very precarious state; and in the course of nature it cannot be very long before I shall be perfectly at liberty to make Marian my bride. Well, Tom, after many difficulties, and many pangs of unfeigned remorse on Marian's part, I have prevailed with her to plight her troth to me; we exchanged rings on a broomie knowe near the Manse one evening, when none but the lintwhite and the throstle witnessed our vows.'

"How," said Colonel Pennington, casting down the letter, and striking the table violently with his hand—how shall I detail the rest? or how shall I convey the moral I wish, and not say thy kinsman was a villain? Strange as it may seem, incredible as it appears to me even on reflection, Lord Mowbray had no sooner entered into this solemn engagement than he repented it. Marian was indeed, to use his own words,

'A lovely flower in her own wild bower.'

But how would she transplant? how look in

a parterre of cultivated exotics? How would her broad Scotch accent and uncouth pronunciation of foreign tongues sound in the mouth of a Lady Ambassadors? It makes my cheek burn to think of it!" continued the Colonel, after a short pause; "pshaw! is this the language of a man? weakness—folly—villany. Poor Marian! his protracted absence at the time which he had fixed for his return, at length took effect upon her temper and her behaviour; her unfortunate attachment undermined not only her own but her father's happiness, by depriving him of the comfort and solace of a dutiful fond child's attentions; and, in fine, carried him sooner to his grave than in all probability the course of nature would have done.—But it is enough; I will finish the sad tale briefly. Several persons of high repute in Marian's own country sought her hand in marriage; but she rejected them all, and wasted and wasted away, year after year; till, at length, Lord Mowbray wrote her a letter, recommending her to take the actual substantial good, and not wait for an uncertain one, as he

found himself so deeply engaged in political transactions that he thought it very unlikely he should ever marry. He lamented, he said, to give her this advice, but it was the advice of a friend. The romantic flirtation of a boyish attachment ought not to impede her fortunes; and, therefore, he found himself in honour bound to give her back her promise. In honour!!! let no woman deceive herself for a moment on a similar occasion: the man who gives her up cares not for her."

"Base! base!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray.

"From the time," resumed the Colonel, "that Marian received this letter she had no heart to do any thing; she drooped and withered; but, without a murmur, bowed to the decree. Your kinsman married a woman of enormous wealth; she had beauty likewise, and was what was called every body's admiration—a great comfort this to a man in his domestic life! Was it her temper, her worth, her abilities that were admired?—no; merely her form, her fashion, the ephemeral attributes of a fine lady calculated to

please every one while they last, except him whom it is most her duty to please. No offspring blessed this joyless union; it was a heartless compact, an exchange of rank and title for wealth; happiness could have nothing to do with the arrangement; and, a few short years of youth and splendour over, it appeared in its own native depravity. The old Lady Mowbray lived on to extreme old age. Marian never forsook her, though she was a most unloveable person; but strove with unremitting attention to compensate for the only fault she ever committed—that of having loved and trusted her faithless son. A few years after Lord Mowbray's marriage, I was present at his first interview with Marian. Her feelings were then tried to the uttermost; nor was she always exempt from blame in point of temper. Her indignation at witnessing the behaviour of Lady Mowbray to the Dowager, sometimes broke forth in expressions of contempt; for, as years go on, they add something to the asperity of every temper, one only being's excepted,—I mean General Mont-

gomery's: and in poor Marian's case, who can wonder it should have been so? The world called Lord Mowbray a good man, for he was rich and lavish; the world called him a good-natured man—for he was a witty, gay, convivial companion. He had talents which effected some public services, for which Government thought fit to reward him with emoluments and honours. He had friends, or persons who assumed the title of friends, glad to be his guests, or win his money. He conformed *in the Country* (for it is held that people of fashion *in Town* are without souls for the season) to the outward rules of the established religion, and went to church, looked grave, talked of *example*, and dozed in a very respectable manner through the sermon; invited the clergyman of the parish to his Sunday's dinner regularly, and, as he came, swore the parson was a very good fellow; but his heart was cold, and the wit which exhilarated others shed no brightness within; for when he made his company laugh, he must frequently have shuddered at the con-

trast which he felt was so strikingly depicted in his own breast."

"You draw a melancholy picture of a mere man of fashion," observed the young nobleman.

"Receive it, my dear friend, for truth, on the faith of my experience," replied the Colonel. "Yet this very faulty and almost worthless man was gifted with a power to fascinate, such as I have rarely seen equalled. Young, old, middle-aged, all owned the spell: no, by Heaven! he was not intended to be, by nature, what he was by art. I loved him very sincerely; yes, I affirm, I love the memory of his fascination still; but as, in after-life, something of similar character, whether of good or evil, is always seen in those of the same race, though it may be modified, eradicated, or encouraged by circumstances, I tell you all these truths, Lord Mowbray, that you may have timely warning: above all, I tell them to you, that you may honour and respect womankind; and, of all womankind, Marian, the ill-fated, ill-treated Marian.—But hallo! there, I say;

what is that?" cried the Colonel, starting up: "did you not see a shadow pass over the opposite wall? there must be some impertinent listeners at that same window: dead for a ducat!" continued the impetuous Colonel, as he lifted the only candlestick that now contained any light, and hurled it at the window, by which act, they were left in perfect darkness. Though they saw no one, they both distinctly heard suppressed laughter and whispering apparently proceeding from some persons under the window, which seemed to be in derision of the Colonel's vain attack upon them, and was evidently a female's voice."

While Colonel Pennington tumbled over chairs and tables in endeavouring to make his way to the window to discover the intruders, Lord Mowbray was groping about to find the door or the bell, that he might call for a light, and direct the servants to search in the garden for the authors of the disturbance. During these fruitless attempts, the little sharp laugh continued, with repeated peals of merriment at the confusion which increased, and at the vol-

lies of strange oaths in which Colonel Pennington indulged ; at length, when tumbling over a heavy arm-chair, he came prostrate on the floor, the mirth of his opponents at this fresh misfortune knew no bounds ; the Colonel's patience was already exhausted, and, stung with defeat, he now seized the chair that had lucklessly caused his overthrow, and hurled it, and every piece of furniture within his reach, in the direction of the window. Against the window and the walls, the missiles fell with a loud crash.

The noise, together with Colonel Pennington's voice, which, as he alternately called for the attendants, and swore at the culprits who had escaped him, rose to a Stentorian pitch, at length awoke many of the inhabitants of the Hall, who came running to his assistance, one after another, as fast as they could scramble on their clothes.

Mr. Sampson Skinner was the first who appeared, wrapped in a flowered silk bed-gown, and a red velvet cap on his head, bearing a light ; next came Miss Macalpine, in a flounced dimity night-dress, her face showing the hard lines of

sorrow and age from beneath the well plaited frill that bordered her coif.

“Mercy on me!” said Lord Mowbray to himself; “can that be the Colonel’s beautiful Marian? Heavens! what a face! what a figure is that for a *heroine de roman*! what a subject for Flirtation!”

Next arrived Sir Richard Townley, with his hair *en papillottes*, his sharp nose covered with snuff, his lean legs, like two bare bones, appearing under his black silk inexpressibles, a drawn sword in one hand, and a taper in the other. These, with sundry servants of the household and ladies’ maids, were assembled and assembling round the infuriated Colonel, who, half ashamed at the mischief he had caused, and the disturbance he had created, for, perhaps, only a silly, inquisitive intrusion on the part of some of the domestics of the family, scarcely knew what to say or how to explain what had happened; but his wrath was not sufficiently appeased for him to be rational, and therefore turning the tide of his displeasure against the parties who stood before him,

he inquired, angrily, "What the deuce they all meant by such confusion and dismay?"

"Why, did you not call for help, Sir?" said half a dozen voices at once.

"And isn't here the window all smattered to pieces, and the furniture tossed about, as if Old Nick had been playing at nine-pins?" said Mrs. Fenton, the housekeeper.

"Keep me! what's all this clatter about?" inquired Miss Macalpine, in a somewhat peevish tone. "Can your Lordship explain?"

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Sampson Skinner, "the case seems to speak for itself; there has been an attempt at forcible entrance against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King. Observe, Gentlemen, the whole window is destroyed, and even the window-frames and their appurtenances much injured."

"Pshaw! man! I know that! what signifies talking about it? but the thing to discover is, who were the impertinent rascals who thrust their noses in here where they had no business; perhaps, as you say, with an intention of breaking into the house, but for me."

“They must have climbed up with some difficulty, and doubtless with bad intention,” said Mr. Sampson Skinner, examining the window; “the *quo animo*, you know, is always to be considered.”

Mr. Aldget, who arrived at this moment, came forward rubbing his eyes, and exclaiming, as he caught the drift of his partners observation, “How! have we had house-breakers here? that’s death by the law, and no bad job for us.”

“Hush! man, you are asleep?” whispered Mr. Skinner; and shaking him roughly as he spoke, the eager lawyer was on his guard in a moment:—“Has search been made in the premises?” he continued.

“Yes, Sir; we have looked every where,” quickly answered two or three of the men-servants: “and besides, the dogs were loose, and we cannot understand how *any* one could have come near the house.”

“Do you mean to insinuate,” cried Colonel Pennington, his anger returning at the imputation that he had been mistaken, and had unnecessarily raised the alarm—“Do you mean to say—”

“Leave the business to us, my dear Sir—leave it to us, we will take proper measures,” said Mr. Aldget; “and it will be hard, indeed, if the delinquents escape our vigilance.” His eyes now wide open, and sparkling at the thoughts of professional employment.

“Pshaw!” cried the Colonel, turning to Lord Mowbray.

What Lord Mowbray thought all this time, it was not easy to discover; but he stood apparently an amused, though quiet spectator of the scene. At length walking to the window, and examining the facilities of approach, he contented himself with observing, that “detected house-breakers would scarcely go off tittering and laughing; that the voices they heard were not those of men; and that it was probably some of the female-servants, or some of the gipsies they had heard of, who, for a frolic, or from curiosity, had thus alarmed them.” And, smiling at Colonel Pennington, he wished all a good night.

Most of the disturbed persons assembled in the drawing-room were of the same opinion, and one by one they stole away.

“ Allow me, Miss Macalpine, to conduct you,” said Colonel Pennington, who was one of the last, with the exception of the domestics, to leave the scene of confusion :—“ allow me to see you safe to the door of your apartment—I hope you will take no cold. These insolent intruders who have been at work to-night shall rue the hour, and pay dearly for their temerity, if we can but lay hold of them, or my name is not Pennington. Ay, Miss Marian, I was talking over old times to the young Lord, when these curious, ill-mannered vagabonds, whoever they were, climbed the window to overhear what was saying. I know them to have been eves-droppers, and nothing else; though the crafty knaves, Skinner and Aldget, (I wish Montgomery read their characters as I do,) would magnify the thing into burglary, and heaven knows what, because such things are harvests to them: be assured, however, the parties were mere idle listeners, which is bad enough, certainly: I wish the chairs and tables had fallen on their heads, instead of on the windows; I trust their sconces will yet be broken; and, by the Lord!—”

“ Dear Colonel, dinna speak so loud, you’ll waken the General; and don’t swear. Good night—we’ll talk the matter over to-morrow—good night.”

“ Good night! I am sorry I have been the means of disturbing your rest, Miss Macalpine,” said the Colonel, as he kissed the withered hand he held, with something of the gallantry of former times, and left her at her chamber door.

The servants still lingered in the apartment; for servants, even when roused from their warm beds, and but half awake, still love to gossip. Margery, one of the house-maids, stood lamenting over the ruin of the damask curtains, or rather over her labour of the morrow, which she foresaw would be endless in removing the shower of wax that had fallen from the Colonel’s projectile candle and candlestick; while Mrs. Fenton, the housekeeper, angrily observed, that Colonel Pennington’s boisterous ways were enough to alarm a regular family out of their wits.

“ But never mind,” said little Mr. Aldget, who, with his partner, remained to learn all he

could from all parties—"never mind, Mrs. Fenton; it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Your friend Humphreys the glazier, and Squab the upholsterer, will be the better for this; and your friend Sampson Skinner there, and your humble servant, none the worse: and it is of no consequence to the General—what's a few guineas to him, eh! Mrs. Fenton? we must all, you know, have an eye to the main chance, or we shall lay by nothing for old age."

"Very true, Sir; I, for one, always thinks of laying by—that's a fav'rite rule of mine, you know, Mr. Aldget: well, Sir, good night, Sir."

"Good night, ma'am—but where's my light?"

"Here's a candle, Sir."

"Oh! thank you—good night. Come, Skinner:" and so saying, the sprightly lawyer laid hold of his partner, and at last all the disturbed inhabitants were once more safe and quiet within their apartments.

CHAPTER VI.

“ A lawyer art thou ! come not nigh ;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye—
The falsehood of thy sallow face !”

WORDSWORTH.

MR. Abraham Aldget was a country solicitor, who acted as the General's law-agent; he was not, it is hoped, a fair specimen of his tribe—but afforded rather an instance of anomaly in the profession to which he belonged. By early dawn, he was mounted on the General's piebald pony Surefoot, and set off, as he expressed it, to take cognizance of the affairs of the preceding evening;—he might have said of the affairs of the neighbourhood in general, for his attention was seldom confined in any of his morning circuits to one single object.

The ruling maxim, indeed, of the indefatigable Abraham, was to make a journey in behalf

of one client, furnish opportunities by which he turned to account the affairs of half a dozen others ; a word here, and a word there, given in due season, in his perambulations, would, he found, often transform petty feuds and trifling jealousies into serious disputes, and thus lay the foundation of a profitable suit ; while friendly offers of assistance and accommodation to his more peaceable neighbours, in regard to their purchases, contracts, bargains, &c. served his purpose equally well in another way. It is true this latter concern in their interests ended, like the more hostile proceedings of the law, in long bills with the items : “ Letters read, attendance given, interviews with A. and counter-interviews with B. ; detained a long time. Journey to C., and expenses the whole day, &c. &c.” But though the catastrophe removed the veil and left the astonished clients, in both instances, without ground to dispute the accuracy of such a diary, and probably, with no substantial benefit derived to them beyond their dear-bought experience, still they were invariably glad to pay, to escape the last and great

misfortune of all,—an action for the bill ;—and thus lived and became rich, Abraham Aldget and his partner.

Actively however, and with a zeal and gravity becoming the duty he was upon, Mr. Aldget bestrode his pony on the present occasion, and he quitted Montgomery-hall with an assurance that he would not return and leave the offenders who had so boldly disturbed the repose of its inhabitants undiscovered. The first house in the village which caught his attention was the barber's shop, being also the coffee-house of the place. Mr. John Combie, its occupier and master, was well calculated for the double post which he held of tonsor and host. He was at once civil and loquacious, a deep politician, and a fellow of infinite jest and humour; equally at home in settling the affairs of the nation or of his neighbours over a glass of punch, as in amusing a customer when operating on his chin; and such his popularity for talent and conviviality, that he was invariably called to the chair at every village festival, where he shone the Swift of his circle.

To this person, Abraham Aldget determined to address his first inquiries, persuaded that if aught were known of the last night's proceeding, he was the man to be acquainted with it, and the very man of all others to disclose what he knew. He made up, therefore, to the shop door, and, leaning over his pony's neck, called in a cracked voice, which he tried to modulate into a tone of condescending familiarity to its inmate, "Is Mr. John at home? I say—any one in the shop?" when John Combie in *propria persona*, with well-powdered wig (fit emblem of his art,) and smirking face, popped out of the back parlour, the *caffé* apartment of the house.

"Oh! Mr. Aldget, Sir, is it you? won't you please, Sir, to unlight? here, Ralph, take the gentleman's horse:—a cup of coffee, Mr. Aldget? pray Sir, do."

"No, thank ye, no thank ye, my good friend Combie, I am in haste. I am sorry to say there was a sad affair at the Hall last night:" and he related the disturbance. "You must have some bad folks amongst you—cannot you look about

you and give a guess at the delinquents? To inform against evil doers, is a praiseworthy action, and is always rewarded. I myself, you know, am not backward at drawing my purse-strings when a discovery of the kind is to be made."

"Ah!" said John Combie, with a knowing look, "that takes one penny out and brings two pennies in, Mr. Aldget."

"Well, well," rejoined the lawyer, "but do you know of no bad characters in these bounds? I shall keep the secret of your having any hand in informing, rest assured of that, Mr. Combie."

"Indeed, Mr. Aldget, you may well do so, for I have nothing to inform about. I am truly sorry the good General has been disturbed, and would gladly name the offenders if I knew 'em, but I really do not, 'pon honour, Mr. Aldget. 'Tis a sad story truly, and seems to be of a piece with the broken bridge, and the felled trees, and the other depravities committed lately, but I could not precisely say as how I could fix the deed on any one; but there is a family of the Giles's lives down near

Love-lane, that they say are a very worthless set ; but Squire Carlton has taken a great fancy to Jem, and always has him along with him in his fishing and sporting excursions whenever he's at the Hall ; and is going to make him his gamekeeper, people says ; but I could never positively fix nothing evil upon 'em, not I ; and for the matter of suspicion, there be the gipsies, who are always coming about these parts. The General is too kind, Mr. Aldget, to these vagabonds, and mayhap it's some of them."

" Ay, very likely, very likely, as you say, Mr. Combie ; but what is the story of the broken bridge you spoke of just now ?" The latter having made himself master of that affair, remarked, with symptoms of astonishment, " that it was strange the General had not commanded him to take active measures about it ; but if the General goes to sleep, it is my business to be awake, Mr. Combie ; I shall look to the matter without loss of time—is there no other news, Mr. John ?"

" Let me see:—why, yes—they say Squire Carlton wants to obtain Andrew's cottage for

his gamekeeper, and pretends he has a right to the ground ; he has been at him about it ever since he comed down this time."

" Is Mr. Carlton arrived at the Manor-house, then ?" said Mr. Aldget, apparently astonished, " and I not acquainted with it—impossible !"

" Yes, but he is, though ; he came there these five days ago. Well, but as I was saying, the Squire, to show his generosity, has offered the old man twice the value of his lease ; but Andrew will not hear of removing ; and though he used to be a great favourite heretofore, this affair has altered things completely, and Mr. Carlton don't call any more when he passes the cottage as he used to do, nor gives no presents to Ambrose, who is going to be married to Rose, you know ; and they say as how that Andrew swears he'll go to law and spend his last penny rather than yield up his right to the tenement. It requires only half an eye to see the why and wherefore of all this ; though, Mr. Aldget:—foolish, eh ! (between ourselves)," said John Combie, with one of his archest looks.

" A spirited resolve, I should rather say,"

rejoined Mr. Aldget: "Andrew Delvin is right—quite right; I'll give him my advice upon that subject, though Mr. Carlton, the Honourable Mr. Carlton, ought to have his way, too, if possible. Good morning to you, Mr. John. No more news stirring at present, I think you say? Well, I must not waste time, but haste to business. Good day—good day, Mr. Combie." And away trotted Mr. Aldget, his brains filled with laudable resolves not to neglect any opportunity of making a job from the cobbler's stall to the princely palace: though his original errand, it must be confessed, was somewhat forgotten in the prospect just opened to him of fresh occupation in the affair of the broken bridge, and in Andrew Delvin's quarrel with Mr. Carlton; and then, by the idea which occurred of keeping up interests by waiting personally on the latter gentleman, whose agency, and his father's before him, had been a lucrative concern to Sampson Skinner and himself. In this resolution, he was strengthened as he reflected on Mr. Carlton's very unexpected return to the Manor-house; occasioned perhaps by some sud-

den event, which it was his duty, for his client's sake, to take cognizance of, as his phrase ran ; but it was too early yet for the visit, and he turned to Delvin's cottage, therefore, in his way, where alighting, and passing the pony's bridle over the paling, he entered the little garden.

Assuming an air of protecting kindness, he accosted Andrew, who was busy at his work, with a " How goes it, master ? it is some months since I have had the pleasure of seeing you. Why, how your little plantation is grown ! and your garden ! Bless me ! how thriving every thing looks ! And there 's the pretty moon-eyed Rose, the pride of the village, just as beautiful as ever ! Well ! my good Andrew, I give you joy of this little paradise : possessing these, you need envy no man."

" Nor do I, Mr. Abraham ; I can assure you of that, Sir. I have lived here these forty years, and here, please God ! I will die. But though I envy no man, there 's some do envy me !"

" Oh ! many, Andrew. Many, I should suppose, must envy you."

" Very true, Sir ! very true ; but that is not

as I meant it, do ye see. I didn't mean that some may say, 'I wish I were as well off as old Andrew Delvin;' for that is an honest, natural wish; and I wish they were, with all my heart! But there's a great Squire, not an hundred miles off, that wants to ferret a poor man out of his house: the more shame for 'un—but I'll see him hang'd upon one of his own trees first."

"How's this, Andrew? you seem warm,—explain, explain, I beg. State your case; but don't be in a passion, Mr. Delvin—don't be in a passion: I have known more causes lost by loss of temper, than by any other way in the world."

"I be rather a hot one, that's sure; but its enough to put a man in a passion, to see the rich and great, who have a power more money than they know what to make use on, wanting to deprive a poor man of his lawful rights, and turn him out of his own house, in his old days, to seek a new place to die in. Why, there be shame on the very face of such proceedings!"

"But instead of getting into a passion, I

wish you would explain matters coolly, Mr. Delvin; and then I shall see what to make of them."

"Why, Mr. Abraham, there's Squire Carlton has the impudence to say he has the power, and will use it if I don't agree to his terms, as he calls them, to turn me out of this bit of ground, that I have worked in these forty years and upwards! He has the power to do this, truly? dang me! if I believe one word of it. Do you think he has? You know the law, Mr. Aldget," continued Andrew, wiping his forehead.

"You have a lease, haven't you?" inquired the lawyer.

"Yes, Sir, to be sure, from his own father! he can't deny that. His father lived among us as a father; but this here Squire, whom we never saw till last year, used to come here when he was at the Hall every day, cajoling my daughter, and telling her how he would give her a great portion, and make me a rich man too; and wanted me at that time to exchange my farm of Delvin Side, for one of his new houses out upon the moor yonder. I

thought it all mighty civil then, though I did not know the reason on 't; but now I knows for why it is, and I despise him for his cunning: 'tis that he may settle Jem Giles, the biggest villain in the country, in my place. But I told him a bit of my mind; and I think he'll not come here again in a hurry!"

"Why, Andrew, you have a good tough spirit of your own, and seem to feel, (and let me tell you you are right, my friend,) that in this country the peasant is as secure in his cottage as the king on his throne, and so it should be; but, remember, if ever you stand in need of any assistance in this affair, or any other, I am at hand and will counsel you for the best—but don't give up your rights, man, whatever you do."

"No, I won't; I'll go to the workhouse afore that!" said the old man, striking his spade into the ground.

"And Rose, hark ye," continued Mr. Aldget, "are you not going to be married?"

"Yes, if you please, Sir," said Rose, curt-seying.

“ Well, take care, child, and have a bit of a deed drawn up, to secure you your own. Your father, you know, has got something, and that will be yours; won't it, Andrew?”

“ Ay, God bless her! to be sure. She is the joy of her old parents' eyes, Mr. Aldget; and I wish it were more for her sake.”

“ Well, whatever it may be, it is always better to look to these things in time. Apply to us, and we will do that job for you: it costs but a trifle.”

“ I am sure we are all much obliged to you, Sir,” said the old man, bowing.

Abraham remounted Surefoot, and turned the pony's head as though he were going to the Hall; but once out of sight of the cottage, he set off at a smart canter towards the Manor-house.

“ Let your master know Mr. Aldget is come,” said he to the servant. And the next moment he was ushered into the room where Mr. Carlton was still at breakfast.

“ I am glad to see you, Mr. Aldget; I was going to send for you, as I did not

think you could know of my return ; it is rather unexpected to myself."

" Oh ! pardon me, Sir," replied the wily lawyer, " that were impossible ! Your arrival among your people causes too much happiness for me not to hear of it ; and the moment I did so, I could not forget my duty."

" Well ! sit down, Sir ; sit down, you are welcome. Will you take breakfast?"

" With much pleasure, Sir ; a fine, sharp spring air begets a good appetite." And when he had appeased his hunger, which seemed by no means an assumed one, spite of the cold ham and chocolate provided for him ere he quitted Montgomery-hall, Mr. Carlton addressed him :

" Now we must to business, if you please, Mr. Aldget. You will be astonished when I tell you, that Old Delvin has refused to give up the lease of the few paltry acres on which his house stands, though I have offered him handsomely for doing so ; full double what his term is worth ; but he spurns my offer and defies me : and yesterday, when I spoke to him, and at last,

angry with his obstinacy and unmannerly behaviour, hinted that the affair was in my power, he swore he would pull the Manor-house about my ears, before he allowed me to turn him out of his tenement: this is language I cannot suffer, and I desire, therefore, Mr. Aldget, that you will instantly examine his lease, and see what can be done. I have some faint recollection, in old Sarah Woodruffe's case, whom you removed last Michaelmas, that you or Mr. Skinner, told me I could eject her, owing to some clause in her lease. I do not remember whether you availed yourself of this; but all the leases, I believe, are on the same tenure.

“Yes, Sir!” replied Mr. Aldget; “yes, we did: or otherwise the old woman would have been there still. But we succeeded in turning her out—let me see, it was two days before Christmas Day, the snow was on the ground,—and she died soon after, in the workhouse.”

“Well, Sir; never mind that now,” resumed Mr. Carlton; “this old Delvin *must* be served in the same way if he will not hear reason.”

“Most undoubtedly, Mr. Carlton, I will look

to the lease immediately. I must be for the next two days at General Montgomery's: but I will send for the papers. You *did* make known to him your generous intention, I think you said, Sir, of indemnification for loss or removal, &c.?"

"To be sure I did; but he is as intractable as a mule, and as viciously inclined, it appears, to me. Right or wrong, however, Mr. Aldget, I desire to know—is it not your opinion that I can force him to law with me, and so ruin him?"

"Nothing is easier than that," rejoined Mr. Aldget; "but then, you know, Sir, with men of character, like Mr. Sampson Skinner and myself, if this intention appeared upon the face of our proceedings, we should be ruined ourselves."

"Bah! don't talk to me in that tone, Sir; is it not the very essence of your calling to make the worse appear the better reason, and to take every thing in hand, however desperate, provided it promises to give you employment? At all events, I am determined the thing shall be tried. If a clause in the lease of the other tenant enabled

me to eject her, it is more than probable the same will be found in old Delvin's, if you look into it narrowly."

Abraham Aldget saw clearly enough, that Mr. Carlton's mind was made up on the point; and though the recollection of the odium he had undergone in poor Sarah Woodruff's business made him reluctant to engage in a similar affair, yet this feeling was nothing in the balance against Mr. Carlton's agency; the loss of which, he foresaw, might follow a refusal to meet his wishes.

"True, Sir! true!" he replied hastily; and as if recollecting himself, "I had forgotten the possibility of the lease helping us. If we find sufficient grounds in Delvin's lease, the case is altered entirely. Nothing can be more fair or proper, than to take advantage—*honourable* advantage, I mean—of such a circumstance; especially when your overtures in the first instance have been so very liberal—princely, I may say. If we find this clause, there can be no difficulty whatever."

“ Be it so then, and set about the matter instantly ; remember I have the thing much at heart, and it must be carried through without any of the law’s delays. I flatter myself you have always found me liberal ; and you will do so in the present instance, if, after having explained my wishes, I find you attend properly to them.” Mr. Carlton laid a marked emphasis on the latter words, which produced in his hearer a conviction that something worse than *no* reward would attend his neglect of them.

Quickly, therefore, he replied, “ Depend upon my services, Sir ; they shall be exerted to the uttermost :” and so saying, he made his bow and retired, well pleased, notwithstanding the scruples he had at first professed, with the issue of his visit.

As soon as he had crossed his pony, this indefatigable person recollected another claim upon his attention. The apothecary of the neighbouring post-town had a dispute with his next neighbour, the grocer, about a certain bay-window, built to enlarge his shop, whereby the premises of the latter were con-

siderably darkened, and his property injured ; so, in the belief, therefore, that an indictment against this nuisance would probably be the fruit of a short conversation with his friend, Joseph Drench, he turned a mile and a-half out of his direct road to make the experiment. “ At any rate,” said he to himself, “ if Drench has not spirit enough to go to law, I may talk to Figg on the subject, and bring matters in this way to an issue, that will require our interference.”

Pursuing these and other reflections, he rode slowly on ; but his restless mind was always on the alert for fresh objects ; and the thought struck him, that the Carlton manors, lying contiguous to the Montgomery estate, would, if united to it, form a property of such value, as to render the annexation a matter of the highest importance to their possessor. It was a thought not to be hastily dismissed ; and though Abraham Aldget saw not clearly how any particular advantage would accrue to himself in the matter, (beyond what the changes and annexations of property are sure to afford his

profession,) still he went on ruminating upon an idea, which in itself was life and aliment to his spirit.

“ I have it,” he said, at length, (and the Grecian philosopher pronounced his triumphant *Eureka* with no prouder feelings than did Abraham Aldget this solution of his problem,) —“ I have it! Mr. Carlton must marry Lady Emily. Yes, it must be so:—and no small benefit is to be derived from the very drawing up of the settlements in an affair so complicated. Let me see: first, we have Montgomery estate in entail; then, failing issue, in entail, to children of next heir—but failing male heir only to Carlton estate, both said properties devolve in right to female issue of marriage—and so, estates joined in perpetuity to heirs male and female in succession.”

A deep reverie followed this soliloquy, during which Abraham Aldget conjured up as many fair visions as ever lover did in dreaming of his mistress; but his pony, meanwhile, had not entered into the motives which induced the rider to turn from the direct road home; and,

availing himself of the liberty which the bridle hanging loosely on his neck had given him, he crept unperceived into a by-path conducting more immediately to the Hall. Down this, he was proceeding at a quick amble, such as horses voluntarily adopt as they move homeward, when suddenly his off-leg slipped into a tremendous hole, and the shock had nearly brought poor Surefoot and his burthen into the mire together. The former struggled to recover his lost equilibrium; and the latter, thoroughly roused from his reverie by a sense of the danger he had escaped, now hastily descended, resolved to place his neck no longer in jeopardy, but to reconnoitre before he proceeded farther. As he looked round, he discovered that he had left almost all track of the beaten path, and stood in a kind of slough, which formed a boundary between the estates of his two clients, Carlton and Montgomery, and from which, on the right hand or left, there appeared to be no hope of extricating himself.

In this dilemma, doubting whether to pro-

ceed or to turn back, his attention was suddenly roused by hearing voices that were familiar to him; and, from some words that came distinctly to his hearing, his curiosity was stimulated to listen to the discourse of the speakers. Leaving Surefoot to indulge his propensity for some long, fresh-budding grass which grew on the farther side of the bank, he stepped on, softly screened from observation by a thick quick-set hedge, and soon ascertained that the colloquy was passing between Mr. Carlton and Rose Delvin.

“Indeed, Mr. Carlton, I cannot stop with you no longer; I promised father not to speak to you, and I must not break my promise, you know.”

“Break your promise! nonsense, pretty one!—why don’t you know what a promise means? Why, a promise is made to be broken, except it is voluntarily given with all your heart and soul. Now, I am sure your promise was not a willing one in the present instance. Rose, dear Rose, do not say it was.”

“What a pity it is,” thought Mr. Aldget, “that he is not a lawyer!”

“Willing or not willing, Mr. Carlton,” rejoined Rose, you know I must obey my parents, else what did I learn my catechism for? Pray, pray let go my hand.”

“Nay, now, Rose, my moon-eyed Rose, do not be so coy. Hear me you shall, whether you like it or not: I will not lose this opportunity. I advise you, for your own sake, to let me speak quietly to you; why, dear one! you have nothing to fear from me. Sit down on this bank, and let us have a little conversation.”

“Well, Sir, remember it is not my fault; I did not agree to meet you: you have caught me and—and I must listen to you; but pray take your arm away, Mr. Carlton.”

“Your *fault*, sweet Rose? no—you can commit no fault. Young, gentle, beautiful, and enchanting as you are, you *must* be in the right. I vow, as you sit there on that bank, you look more fit to be a queen on a throne than a country maiden.”

“La, now, Mr. Carlton! don’t ye speak so; it makes me quite ashamed to hear ye.”

“Listen to me, Rose. It is quite impossible

that you should be designed to become the partner of a country boor, to churn butter and feed poultry; those beautiful eyes were formed for very different purposes than to open on a farm-yard, or attract the louts at a country fair; that divine figure cannot be destined to coarse hard work; nor those delicate fingers, which tempt a kiss, be doomed only to knit and to spin! Rose, my sweetest Rose, leave off such low pursuits. Dismiss Ambrose, and trust to me; you shall see to what a rank I will elevate you! You shall never hear any thing but the sweetest sounds; never wear any thing but the richest jewels; your beauties shall be arrayed in the most costly attire:

‘ Ecstatic powers shall your whole life employ,
And every sense be lost in every joy.’ ”

“ Goodness gracious, Sir! what signifies talking to me so? just like what one reads in a printed book. You know I’m engaged to Ambrose Philips; we have kept company these two years, and he’ll break his heart if I leave him, that’s sure.”

“ Ha, ha, ha !” replied Mr. Carlton, laughing ; “ break his heart ! no, no, men’s hearts don’t break, pretty one ; ‘ Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.’—Break his heart ! no, no, believe me, he’ll go on breaking stones and mending roads just as usual, whether you dismiss him or not, as he ought to do, for he is fit for nothing else ; but if it were not so, better fifty such hearts were broken, than that you should become the prey of a country loon—a Caliban—a monster, such as he.”

“ No, indeed, he’s not a monster, and he loves me better than you, perhaps ;—let go my hand, Mr. Carlton.”

“ Well, well, be calm, and don’t spoil your beauty by frowning so, and I will do exactly as you desire, pretty one.”

“ O Mr. Carlton, I am much troubled in mind ; let me go home :—oh ! what if father and mother could see me now, what would they say to me ? what could I say to them ?”

“ Why, laugh to be sure, love, and tell them you had found a lover more suited to you than

the coarse Caliban they design for your husband."

"Indeed I could not do that, Mr. Carlton; mother would pierce me through with a look, and father would strike me dead at his feet."

"Good God! Rose, it is you who now alarm me!" exclaimed Mr. Carlton, in affected horror.—"What, are they such unnatural parents? then, indeed, you should have no scruple in telling them you have placed yourself under my protection."

"Oh, Sir, my mother and——"

"What! Rose, am I to be refused and despised, and all my offers disregarded for a hundred of *your* relations!—Pray how many uncles and aunts and cousins to the hundred and fourth generation of the noble family of Delvins am I yet to contend with in your favour?"

"Sir, none of my family are noble; that is to say, they be none of them lords or ladies, and that's what you call noble, I believe; but they be all good people: I have two uncles and one aunt, and——"

“ Oh ! my silly Rose, now could I find it in my heart to be out of all patience with you, but that you are so lovely :” and Mr. Carlton passed his arm round her waist.

“ So lovely,” cried Ambrose furiously, who had come upon them unperceived, “ that you nor no villain shall take her from me :”—and he pushed Mr. Carlton aside violently with one arm, while he snatched Rose to his bosom with the other.

Mr. Carlton staggered to regain his feet. —“ How now, fellow ! am I to speak to no one on my own estate without *your* leave and authority ? things are come to a pretty pass, indeed, when the clown is to give law to the man who supports him :—away with you, fellow ! or it shall go ill with you.”

“ Mr. Carlton,” said Ambrose, trying to suppress his passion, “ I find it very hard to keep my hands from off you : if you were any other than you are, I would tell you, if you be a man, to give me fair play, and——”

“ Take that,” said Mr. Carlton—“ take that, insolent hind !” and he struck him a blow which

would have brought one of less stout frame than Ambrose to the ground.

“Nay, if you be for that work, have at ye!” exclaimed Ambrose, driven past his patience: and springing upon Mr. Carlton, he would have borne him down with the impetuosity of his attack, but his foot slipped and he fell.

“Villain!” cried Mr. Carlton, as he tore a stake from the hedge-row and brandished it over the prostrate Ambrose—“villain! you are in my power!” Rose screamed loudly; but her lover, springing once more on his feet, flung himself upon Mr. Carlton, wrested the stick from his hand, and hurling it away, cried “There’s for ye, coward!” while at the same time raising his arm, with one blow he felled him to the earth.

“Murder! murder! help, help, murder!” cried Mr. Aldget, coming forth from his concealment, and muttering to himself, as he scrambled through the hedge, “here are fine doings: here is assault and battery on one hand—a plea of self-defence on the other—a seduced maiden, and a breach of promise of

Aldget is very cautious, and the pony is very steady, and I am under no alarm. Mr. Humphreys, a little bit of the fat, if you please," whispered Mr. Skinner to the servant, who was carving: "a very fine haunch, indeed, my friend Aldget has missed," he added, turning to the General.

But he was not doomed to miss it, for at that very moment Mr. Aldget entered.

"I hope you will excuse me, General, and all the ladies and gentlemen," (bowing to them) "I hope you will excuse my being so late, and my dirty boots; but I have been so busy—hardly time to turn round, I assure you, so busy."

"Ah! there you are at last, my good Sir; well, what has detained you so many hours? give us an account of your adventures."

"Directly, General—you shall be obeyed directly; only suffer me to take one mouthful, if you please; I have hardly tasted food to-day."

"You must have some dinner first, to be sure, my good Sir. Humphreys, let Mr. Ald-

get have some soup, and the fish; I desired some to be kept ready for you, and," (a pause,) "you look fatigued; a glass of sherry or Madeira, meanwhile, which do you prefer?—a glass of Madeira, Humphreys, to Mr. Aldget."

"I thank you, General, a glass of wine will be most welcome—but no soup—no fish, I thank you. I'll take a slice of that haunch, Mr. Humphreys, if you please."

In truth, the haunch had filled Abraham's eye from his entering the room; and salutations and offerings of every kind were lost upon him, in the contemplation of this dish of his affections.

"You may give me another slice, Mr. Humphreys, the keen air has made me hungry; I have had hard work, Skinner," as he jogged the elbow of his partner; but his eye was still on the plate, which Humphreys, knowing whom he served, continued loading with choice morsels.

The General, in the interval, addressed his inquiry to Mr. Skinner, asking him if he knew whether his friend had been detained by any discovery obtained of the intruders of

last night; when the latter, without turning his head from the point of attraction, and with knife and fork erect in either hand, answered—

“Directly, General—you shall be obeyed directly; suffer me only to eat a mouthful, for I am quite exhausted. Such dreadful events—such awful”—but here the eagerly expected plate was handed to him, and all other considerations became absorbed in the enjoyment of its contents. A few minutes well employed, however, sufficed to the rapid Mr. Aldget; when turning to the General, he said—

“I have been detained upon a very unlucky—a very dreadful business. Poor Mr. Carlton has been rudely assaulted by a fellow that resides in the village—one of his labourers, I believe, who works on his grounds: he is grievously wounded, and I really can hardly say whether he will recover.”

“Good heavens! how very shocking!” re-echoed round the table. “But tell us how?—where?—in open daylight too?—do let us hear, Mr. Aldget.”

“Was he robbed to any great amount?” inquired Mr. Skinner, before his partner could reply to the numerous questions put to him.

The company sat eager for explanation.

“You shall hear,” said Mr. Aldget, pompously—“you shall hear. The story runs thus:” and he began as though he fancied he was stating the case in Court:—“Mr. Carlton, the honourable Mr. Carlton, was going fishing—yes, fishing;—he is very fond of fishing, it is his favourite sport;—and he chanced to come to a style,—no, a hedge,—yes, it was a hedge,—at the same time that Rose Delvin, a pretty looking girl, was getting over the said hedge. Somehow the girl tripped, and was very near having a bad fall, when Mr. Carlton caught her by the arm and saved her; but at the same moment, this rude fellow—Ambrose Philips, I believe, is his name—came up, and without a word passing, or any apparent reason for such mad conduct, flew upon Mr. Carlton,” (pause) “knocked him down,” (pause) “and while on the ground, then and there proceeded to farther acts of violence. My

providential arrival alarmed him, and he made off; but my attention was of course directed to the sufferer, who lay extended, apparently without life, and the villain escaped. We shall soon, however, hear of his apprehension, for constables are already in pursuit of him, and——”

“Where did you get the warrant?” said Skinner eagerly.

“Why, man! from the nearest magistrate, to be sure;” he had almost said “from Mr. Carlton himself;” but as the name hung on his lips, (for the fact was indeed so,) he reflected on this want of tact which was so near betraying him, and destroying the interest of his auditors, in a person whom he desired they should consider at the point of death; and he stopped abruptly, while he kicked his partner Skinner’s legs under the table, to enforce his silence also. Mr. Aldget’s embarrassment did not escape Lady Emily.

“Surely,” she said, “there must be some mistake: are you certain that your alarm at the moment allowed you to understand this matter aright? there must be some mistake.”

“ Oh, no mistake, Lady Emily!—no mistake: I can make deposition both as to person and circumstances.”

“ Ambrose Philips could not have acted as he is represented to have done!” exclaimed Lady Emily warmly. “ There is not a man in the village who bears such a character as Ambrose for industry and quiet demeanour and kindly disposition: but if it be so——”

“ I assure your Ladyship, I am correct,” said Mr. Aldget drily, as if he had made up his mind not to be cross-questioned, or unnecessarily drawn into farther details—“ I am quite correct: it is as I have said, I can assure your Ladyship.”

“ Poor Rose! I am truly sorry for her,” said Lady Emily; “ her affections were bound up in Ambrose, and they were just going to be married. I will still hope your account is exaggerated, Mr. Aldget, and that you are not yet thoroughly acquainted with the particulars.”

“ I wish I could believe so, since I perceive your Ladyship so distressed on the subject,”

said Mr. Aldget; and anxious to give a turn to an affair that would not bear examination, he took advantage of the allusion to Rose's name, as he added, "It is my province now to correct your Ladyship; I am afraid the partiality you entertain for Rose Delvin renders you perhaps blind to her defects; but it is well known in the village that she is a light girl: and, if I may be allowed to say so, unworthy of the favour your Ladyship bestows upon her; and I am sure, knowing as I do the truth, that in this affair Mr. Carlton deserves sympathy more than either Ambrose Philips or Rose Delvin herself."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Aldget," replied Lady Emily, "for any body who is in a state of suffering; but I cannot believe that Ambrose could have been the perpetrator of such violence, unprovoked, and, I rather suspect——"

"What does your Ladyship suspect?" said Mr. Aldget quickly.

"Why, that there has been some reason or other, of which you may be possibly ignorant, that, when known, will remove the load of guilt

from Ambrose. You know, Mr. Aldget, there are at least two ways of telling a story."

"I always thought Emily's *engouement* for this girl would end in something disagreeable," whispered Lady Frances to Lord Mowbray; "it will cure her, I hope, of taking up people in a sphere of life so beneath her own; one is sure to suffer for it in some way or other."

"Lady Emily will learn experience and attend to your warning voice another time!" said Lord Mowbray ironically, and casting a glance at Emily, who sat with downcast eyes and flushed cheek, as she heard herself the object of these remarks.

The General looked at her kindly. "I do not wonder you feel this, my dear love, and we must all confess you plead the cause of your protégée well; but I fear it is a bad case: we will not, however, prejudice poor Rose, but will wait to hear farther."

"My dear uncle!" exclaimed Lady Emily.

"Hech, Sirs!" said Miss Macalpine, "I wouldna wist. Gin Rose Delvin's fause, there's no' that countenance living I would pin my

faith on—puir lassie!—but she was aye a daitied bairn; and I mind me ye were aofttimes craiking at her, for ye spied mony fairlies in her, that ye cared na to allow o'. Weel-a-weel! wha can hinder the wind to blaw—no' a bit but its a pity."

"A pity, indeed!" said Lady Frances; "and while we are discussing and pitying her, Mr. Carlton perhaps is on his death-bed, and no one seems to think of him. But Emily affects a sort of radicalism in her sentiments: and if all the aristocracy were swept away at once—like the old *dévôte* in Moliere, *elle ne s'en souciera pas plus que ça*—but let one of the *people* suffer,—and then we hear of nothing but persecution, oppression, and injustice—and the whole force of her sympathies is at once awakened."

"You are mistaken, Frances—you know you are," said Emily, throwing back her lovely head with the look of a princess. "I am perhaps *too* sensible of the pride of birth. I would not for a thousand worlds, any more than yourself, disgrace it; but what has that to do

with the present question? Rose Delvin's good name is as dear to her and her parents as if she were descended from a nobler race; and I will not sit by and hear her so spoken of; I will do as I would be done by."

"What a tirade! my dear Emily; surely this is one of the speeches you used to learn by heart in the school-room. Miss Devenish would be delighted, could she hear how well you quote; but I only meant to laugh at your romance. You know you are always talking about love in a cottage."

Lady Emily looked distressed.

"And pray what is the chief subject of *your* conversation, Lady Frances, if I may take the liberty of asking?" questioned Lord Mowbray.

"Love in a palace, perhaps," was her reply; "at all events, certainly nothing sentimental: I do not deal in sentiment; I leave that to Emily."

"I believe you are right," he rejoined; "it's best repenting in a coach and six."

"But why must we repent at all?" said Emily.

called for music at an earlier hour than he was wont. It suited with his gentle spirit to dispel the painful feelings which chequer life, by the harmony of sweet sounds, and music in his domestic circle was ever at hand to soothe the ruffled mind when any passing sorrow occurred to disturb its tranquillity. But, although Lady Emily acknowledged the power of this charm in all its force—for she resembled her uncle in the heavenly sweetness of her disposition—she found its influence on her mind that night exerted in vain. In vain she endeavoured to banish the remembrance of Rose and her lover from her thoughts; the sad history returned again and again to trouble her, and haunted her dreams long after she had retired to rest.

“Emily! Emily!” cried Lady Frances, calling from her bed to her sister; “it is now my turn to waken you,—what is the matter? you are moaning so fearfully, it makes me quite nervous to hear you.”

“O dear Frances, I have had such a terrible vision—there—there it is still!”

“What is there?”

“Oh, I cannot bear to tell you—do you not see it?”

“Poh! poh! how childish you are; sit up in your bed and look about you; you are not thoroughly awake yet.”

“Well, Frances, I do look, and oh, fearful sight, there it still is!—do you not see it?”

Lady Frances drew aside her bed-curtains,—a small lamp shed a glimmering light in the room—which was one of those large, wainscotted apartments of the Elizabethan time, that with its dark oak panelling was sombrous even in daylight, and, in the present flickering of the lamp, rendered it scarcely possible to distinguish objects at the farther end,—but Lady Frances thought she beheld a figure moving through the doubtful gloom; and, while she gazed intently to ascertain whether such was the fact, or whether it was her fancy which deceived her, the figure glided between her and the light! Instantly she sprang up and in terror rang her bell. In another minute, their female

attendants, who slept in an apartment adjoining, entered the room.

“ Watson,” said Lady Frances, “ did you hear footsteps in the gallery as you passed, and was our room-door closed ?”

“ My Lady ?” said the abigail, hardly awake, and as if she had obeyed the summons from habit in her sleep—“ What did your Ladyship say ?”

“ Did you hear any noise like people moving, and was my door open or shut ?”

“ Oh ! open—my Lady—no, shut.”

“ Which do you mean ?” asked Lady Frances with impatience.

“ Why really, my Lady, I cannot say, I came in in such haste.”

“ Nonsense !” replied Lady Frances. “ That some being or other, however, walked through the room just now, I cannot doubt. Go, one of you, and desire Mrs. Fenton to come to me instantly.”

“ Has my Lady seen a ghost ?” asked Lady Emily’s attendant of her mistress.

“Ghaists?” cried Miss Macalpine, whose restless disposition generally kept her awake half through the night, and who, alarmed at a repetition, as she imagined, of the preceding evening’s disturbance, hastily entered the room. “What, is all this about ghaists?”

“I don’t know,” said Lady Emily, who shook from head to foot with nervous agitation; “but Frances saw it too, or I should think I had been dreaming——”

“It? what? my dear Lady Emily?”

“O, pray, Miss Macalpine, do not alarm yourself,” said Lady Frances; “you only make Emily more nervous. I wanted the housekeeper.”

Mrs. Fenton now made her appearance, rather displeased at this recurring interruption of her night’s rest; but she listened as a person to whom power was delegated, while Lady Frances directed that the men-servants might look narrowly through the house; for that some evil-disposed persons, for the sake of plunder or some other cause, were certainly wandering about it. “And let two of them

afterwards sit up in the hall, at the bottom of the staircase," added Lady Frances; "our doors shall be carefully bolted, and, I dare say, we shall have no more apparitions.—Emily, come—go to sleep again—how foolish you are to be so frightened——"

"Dinna speak sae proud like, Lady Frances, I canna say that I just believe in spirits, but I'm no' that sure either that there is nane—we canna speak to thae things, it's best to let them alane athegither."

"Dear Miss Macalpine, I am too sleepy to dispute with you; pray leave us now,—I shall have the headach all to-morrow, if I am not left to get some quiet repose."

But though her sister appeared thus to make light of their recent alarm, Lady Emily had been too much agitated to compose herself again to sleep. "Alpinia, I wish you would sit up with me," she whispered, "in my dressing-room: we shall not disturb Frances, and I shall be better talking with you than lying restless in my bed."

The pleasure derived from listening to Miss

Macalpine's long stories made Lady Emily, in some measure, forget her fears; and in their lengthened *tête-à-tête*, the time was beguiled till the morning dawned. As soon, however, as it appeared sufficiently advanced, she declared her intention of going to the Delvins, and endeavouring to learn the particulars of yesterday's fatal occurrence. "I shall be back shortly, Alpinia," pressing the hand of her warm-hearted friend as she spoke; and then stealing gently through her sister's apartment, and hastening across the park, Lady Emily was soon at the gate of Delvin's farm.

She opened the wicket and knocked at the door; there was a murmuring of voices, as if in consultation whether she was to be admitted or not. "Oh! 'tis Lady Emily," said Maude Delvin, opening to give her entrance: but instead of the gladsome welcome she was wont to receive, the old couple stood silent, with countenances expressive of shame and distress; and Rose was sitting sulkily, balancing herself on her chair, and a half-knit stocking in her hand. She rose abruptly, but evidently put on a hardened

look, as much as to say, I shall not own myself in the wrong.

Lady Emily now addressed Maude. "I have heard a terrible story, but I am come to inquire into the truth of it from yourselves, and to know if there is any thing in which I can serve you."

There was a dead silence;—Maude looked at old Andrew, as if she wished him to speak.

"Sit down, my good friends," said Lady Emily kindly, "and let us talk over this affair quietly: be quite open with me; you know I only desire to think as favourably as possible of every body."

"Dear Lady," cried the old man, "your kindness quite upsets me; my words will not come out of my throat; would to God that Rose were as dutiful a child as ye be a kind and excellent Lady! O Lady Emily, that girl—that we took so much pride in—too much, it may be,—and so we are punished for't, and she's become our shame—and then Squire Carlton—big a villain as he is—yet would I give this very farm, and my whole stock along

with 't, to know that he were alive and well this minute."

"Yes, your Ladyship must know," said Maude, (taking upon her to spare her husband the rest of the tale,) "that I have all along told Rose no good would or could come of that Mister Carlton's hankering about our doors, and I positively forbade her taking presents; but she, foolish thing, was quite set up on high, and said I talked like an old woman that did not know nothing of the ways of the world, or what folks did, now-a-days; every body, she said, walked and talked and sat with every body, and folks were not so proud now as they used to be."

"O mother!" interrupted Rose, endeavouring to say something in extenuation.

"Hold your tongue, girl; don't say another word—you have said too much already: but you see, my Lady, what has come of it all—Rose went out, and I fear me she went out by promise to meet the gentleman."

"Lord! mother, I told you before I did no such thing!"

“ O hush, Rose !” said Lady Emily ; “ I fear you have acted imprudently—do not answer your mother in that tone.”

“ Hold your tongue, hardened girl ; I have no patience with you,” cried her father :—“ and so, my Lady, poor Ambrose came by where they two were sitting, and seeing the Squire, as he told us, with his arm round Rose’s waist, he just chucked him to one side, and caught the girl away on the other ; upon which, Squire Carlton provoked and taunted un, till at last they fell to fisty-cuffs, and Philip got the better of him, as I ’m glad he did, and hit him a stroke behind the ear which knocked him down. It served him right, an’ that it did : but then the law—the law will come in, I am afeared ; and if he should die ! oh, what will become of Ambrose ? And for that hussy there, what will wipe off her disgrace ? And how shall we ever show our faces again ?”

“ I didn’t do nothing, indeed I didn’t, my Lady,” said Rose, at last moved to tears, “ that I need to be ashamed of ; and if father and mother is so hard, it’s enough to make me do

wrong. Philips is a cruel cross fellow, and that's what he is, and I'm glad I've found him out before I'm tied for life. What! he pretend, indeed, that he wouldn't marry me! I wouldn't marry *him*, and so there's for him:" and she burst into passionate weeping.

"How you astonish and shock me, Rose!" said Emily compassionately: "why, have you not pledged your faith to become Ambrose's wife? and, after a courtship of two years, will you thus let a slight quarrel separate you for ever?"

"I don't care for him," said Rose; "he treated me like—no, I'll never speak to him again!"

"O Rose, think what provocation he had; remember what cause he had for forgetting himself; and think, too, who gave him that provocation. You will never be happy again—never, Rose, if you do not think better of this matter."

Rose made no answer, but sobbed violently.

"O my Lady, she is harder than our hearth-stone. We must pray God will please

to turn her in time; but it seems just as if we were to be punished for having thought too much of her. O my Lady, we were far, far too proud of her!"

At this moment the father of Ambrose entered; he took off his hat to Lady Emily, who eagerly inquired for his son.

"They have taken him away this very morning, and clapped him up in the county gaol," said the old man, with a sort of unnatural composure: "but I am not afraid; he shall have the best counsel in the land" (striking his stick on the ground) "to defend him, and every honest man will stand by him, for standing by his own. Yes, I be sorrier far for my friends here, than for myself! My child is a good child, but *their* child—I will not say what she is."

"Well, Mr. Philips," interrupted Rose, sullenly, "I will say this—that if you have nothing but ill to say of me, you had better say it to some one else, and not set father and mother against their own child: I repeat, that I did not do nothing I need to be ashamed on, and your son is a most brutal, ill-tempered man,

and I'm exceeding glad that I have nothing more to say to him."

Lady Emily, seeing that matters were likely to come to a still worse understanding between the parties if they remained longer together under the present excitement of their feelings, desired Rose to leave her alone with her parents and Ambrose's father.

"My good friends," she said, as soon as Rose had retired, "we should at all times be merciful to each other, as we hope for mercy, and not aggravate each other's faults: if any body is more to blame in this affair than another, as far as I can see, it is Mr. Carlton. Rose is very young, and vain of her beauty; her head has been turned perhaps for the moment, but let us hope that what has occurred will be a lesson to her: I grieve that she should be so humbled; yet her mortification, properly felt, may turn out a blessing; and when the sting of the reproof and humiliation she has undergone wears away, she will, I am sure, reflect and become sensible of the value of Ambrose's affec-

tion, and the worthlessness of the admiration excited merely by her pretty face."

"May be so," said farmer Philips, "but your Ladyship cannot suppose as how I should ever let Ambrose take her to wife."

"Why not, Mr. Philips? a moment's error on Rose's part will not destroy your son's affection for her, nor can it have undermined her's for him; if you decide thus harshly in the first impulse of your anger, you will repent having done so when it is too late; you have too good a heart, I know, to witness misery in others, which a little forbearance on your part could have saved them, and not feel sorry."

"Very like, my Lady, very like," said the sturdy old man; "but Ambrose's mother was a good woman, and so was my mother, and so was her mother before her; we have all come of respectable parents, from father to son, and I can't, no I can't bear the thoughts that Ambrose should disgrace us all at last by marrying —. I be sorry for you, neighbour Andrew," continued the farmer, suddenly checking him-

self, "and I will not say the word uppermost on my lips; though I am afraid, my Lady, I loses all hopes of your interest for my poor boy as to getting him out of prison, which a while ago I was thinking of asking, but Nathan Philips was always a plain spoken man, and so, once more, there's an end on 't, my Lady."

Farmer Philips moved towards the door to go. "I be sorry for you," he said, stopping on the threshold, and turning to Andrew--"I be sorry for you," and tendering him his hand; but the latter drew back, "No, Philips, you have taunted me with my calamity, you have heaped shame on my face, and I cannot take you by the hand."

"Good heavens!" said Emily, alarmed; "this is too cruel a business. Forgive each other: consider the youth of Rose; the temptation she may have been exposed to; the want of any the slightest proof of actual guilt; and then the future misery of your son, when he finds Rose is lost to him for ever! Consider this, good Mr. Philips: think were she *your* daughter!"

“ My Lady, you are a good lady, and every body ought to attend to your advice: and I hope I shall; but not now.” And as if afraid to listen farther to her appeal, he abruptly quitted the cottage.

Having endeavoured, though she feared, in vain, to speak peace to this distressed family, Lady Emily now returned as quickly as possible to the Hall, revolving how she might best obtain the liberation of Ambrose Philips from gaol: for this purpose, she sought Colonel Pennington, whom she had known from a child, and in whose warm and active spirit she ever met a kind coadjutor in all her little plans for the good of others. She found him in the garden watching a community of bees, and as much interested in the wonderful instinct implanted in these little insects, as though the business of his life were that of a contemplative philosopher. He called her to observe with him some of the manœuvres of that winged tribe,—“ Come and learn,” he said, “ even of these, some of that wisdom which God teaches us in all his works.”

“ O dear Colonel,” said Emily, a little impatiently, “ this is not the moment when I can enter into such speculations. At another time I could take delight in them ; but I have something on my mind which calls for immediate attention, and leaves no place for other thoughts.” She then passed her arm through his, and, as she led him slowly towards the house, related the scene she had witnessed at Delvin’s cottage.

“ I dread the consequences that may ensue,” she added : “ what with Rose’s excited temper, who feels, or fancies herself wronged ; and the fury of old Philips, and the wretchedness of her parents, unless something is done to liberate Ambrose from prison, and to marry the young couple immediately, I fear they will never come together ; and then her reputation as a good and virtuous girl is gone for ever ! Do, dear Colonel, do go, and seek to procure the instant liberation of Ambrose. You who are so good will feel happy to be the means of restoring peace to this distracted family—pray, I beseech you to go directly.”

“What is all this praying and beseeching about?” questioned General Montgomery; who at that moment joined them. “What in the world,” said he, with his own benevolent smile, “are you so eagerly talking about; as if life and death depended upon it, Emily?”

“And so they do,” she replied; and passing her arm through the General’s, as she had already done through Colonel Pennington’s, she looked, with her beaming expression of lively interest, alternately in their countenances, telling her story rapidly over again; and beseeching them to save Rose Delvin, by using their influence to marry her directly to Ambrose.

“But, hear me, Emily! hear me, my dear, impetuous love! you forget, in your anxiety to do good, that the thing is impossible. Philips must undergo the course of the law: I fear he is charged with an offence which may turn out to be serious; and for which, at all events, he must stand his trial.”

“Well, at all events,” said Lady Emily, “I must know how Mr. Carlton is. “Do pray,

dear uncle, ask Colonel Pennington to go over to the Manor-house to-day, and we shall hear the truth from him."

"It shall be done, dearest," said the General; "every thing shall be done: only do not make yourself too anxious. I am sure you never wish any thing that is not reasonable and right; and I heartily desire that you may not be disappointed in this affair of Rose—I desire it, indeed, on all accounts."

Lady Emily was obliged for the moment to be content with the promise of her uncle, for she had observed in his calm steady manner, when speaking on the subject, that his mind was already made up upon it. The party proceeded, therefore, in silence towards the Hall, and, entering the breakfast-room, found all its inmates assembled.

"Well, Emily," cried Lady Frances, "I think you must be pretty well fatigued after having been up half the night."

"Oh! very true," she cried, "but I had quite forgotten that."

Lady Emily was one of those persons who

did forget *self* when the interest of others was concerned.

“ I had forgotten that, and now you mention it, I do feel rather tired; but, dear uncle, I must tell you I never will sleep in King Charles’s room again,—indeed, I cannot. I had such dreadful dreams, it makes me shudder but to think of them. Besides, what is still more dreadful, I saw a figure gliding about the room.”

“ What is all this, child?” asked the General. Lady Frances, who seldom gave herself the trouble to speak when any body would do it for her, though she had been unfeignedly alarmed at the events of the past night, and was by no means disposed to let them pass by in silence, looked at her sister, as much as to say, “ Do you tell the story.” And Lady Emily, accordingly related how they had been disturbed; and wound up the whole history by saying, half seriously, “ I do really think that some misfortune is about to befall the family,—that is what you would think in Scotland, Alpinia, is it not?”

“ Dinna be boding mischief,” replied

Miss Macalpine, “dinna speak o’ thae freaks at a’.”

“It would be a misfortune, indeed,” rejoined Lady Frances, “if the plate were stolen, or the house haunted; but it is, doubtless, some of the gipsies who infest the neighbourhood, and who cause these nightly disturbances.”

“Very true; for when it is coupled with the Colonel’s story of the other night, it must be confessed it looks a little suspicious; though, had not you, Frances, been a witness in the business, I should have supposed Emily’s imagination had conjured up the figure: however, I will cite Corrie Lovel before me, who is head of the gipsies, now in the neighbourhood; we shall hear what he has to say to it; and if, after speaking to him, these apparitions are not laid, we must take other means to banish them. As to Corrie himself, I do not believe that any thing would induce him to rob me even of a straw; but some of his gang may not be so scrupulous: by the way, that man is an extraordinary being; about forty years ago I saved his life, and he has never forgotten it.

During the American war, when we were encamped near Boston, he was taken, and though it afterwards proved a groundless suspicion, was near being hung for a spy. I believed him, from his own account at the time, to be innocent; and, pitying the poor lad, who was then little more than seventeen, I used all my influence at head-quarters, and obtained his life. Many times since, in various countries, it has occurred to me to meet with him; and generally, since I have resided at this place, he has paid me a visit once a year. I have, hitherto, never had a complaint to make either against him or his people; but I do not like these recent ghost-stories, I confess. I do not suspect any of my own servants, neither do I suspect Corrie himself; but I do suspect some of his attendants; and I shall give him a hint to be off, or to keep his subjects in better order."

"Yes," observed Colonel Pennington, "the gipsies are more under subjection to their chief than is imagined: they are a very wonderful race. I have taken some pains to make myself intimate with their peculiarities; and as

they are scattered over the face of the whole habitable globe, I have, in all my wanderings, had opportunities of observing them. Though their different tribes all appear to have distinct languages, and as many distinct religions (as far as they profess any), each approaching more or less to the language and religion of the people among whom they sojourn; yet, this adoption of language and religious opinions arises, I am inclined to think, from motives of policy merely, as they have in fact a language, if not a peculiar worship, of their own. Ask them to tell you what language they speak, and they reply in gibberish; but this is only to evade inquiry; for a very little attention and habit will soon enable any one to distinguish their common parlance with the natives, from their regular and unmixed discourse amongst themselves. They are also full of peculiarities. I remember that the gipsies in Hungary have the greatest passion for any thing shining or glittering, however worthless in itself: this propensity is, to be sure, common to all ignorant and barbarous races; indeed, it may be said to

be inherent to human nature—to the weaker part, at least, for we remark it in women and children:” turning, as he spoke, to Lady Emily.

“Nay, no harsh reflections, dear Colonel!” exclaimed Lady Emily, or we shall not listen to you.”

“You are truly an exception;” laying his rough hand on her arm, as he continued: “It must be said in favour of their taste, however, that the Hungarian gipsies now and then show a partiality for shining substances of sterling value—gold and silver plate, for instance—which they hesitate not to purloin when occasion offers; and of this, with jewels, and other ornaments of price, each family of a tribe have generally a sacred store handed down from one generation to another, which is preserved as a precious inheritance unalienable under whatever reverses of distress or poverty. Although it is difficult to ascertain what mode of worship they follow, the Hungarian gipsies have a translation of the Lord’s Prayer, in their own tongue. And as far as my own observations can warrant the

remark, I think them in general a harmless, wandering race; but it is a lamentable consideration, that so numerous a body of people should be suffered to exist without any systematic attempt at ameliorating their condition. In Hungary, prejudice is strongly against them, and the belief is current that they are cannibals. It may be, however, and most probably is, without foundation, for I cannot imagine—”

The entrance of a servant here broke off the Colonel's account of the gipsy tribes, or, with his propensity to dwell on any subject that he had once undertaken, there is no saying to what length he might have led his auditors in the discussion. “Farmer Philips, Sir,” said the servant, to General Montgomery, “presents his duty, and begs to say a few words, if you will be pleased to see him.”

“Philips !” said the General, as if at a loss for the reason of this request; why, what does *he* want? Oh! I know. Well, show Farmer Philips into my room; I will speak to him directly. General Montgomery remained for a moment silent, then rose and walked to-

wards the door which led to his study ; Lady Emily, whose eyes had been fixed on his countenance from the instant she had caught the name of the person inquiring for her uncle, followed, and taking him affectionately by the hand, said, "Dearest uncle, pray do all you can for Ambrose, and for the poor Delvins."

"I will do all that I can, dear," said the General, kissing her forehead ; and he hastily left the room. Lady Emily walked to the window, to hide the emotion which the renewal of this painful subject had caused her, and waited long in anxious expectation of the General's return. He came not, however ; and when they met he was silent, and she failed not to augur confirmation of her worst fears from this unusual mystery.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ I lent my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trusty tree ;
But first it bowed, and syne it brak,
Sae my fause luvè's forsaken me.”

OLD BALLAD.

“ Do any of you wish to see my friend, Corrie Lovel ?” said General Montgomery, as he half-opened the library-door, and perceived the family party assembled there ; “ he is in the court-yard in his carriage, and I am going to speak to him.”

“ Oh ! yes, I will go,” said Lady Emily : and every body prepared to follow the General, except Lady Frances.

“ In his carriage, indeed ! My uncle really humours those people too much ; at least, if

little transformation from the original fashion which it had worn on the back of its first bleating owner, for it loosely enveloped the body only down to the waist; was without sleeves, and was confined by a strong girdle of leather, and a large silver buckle of antique form. His arms were clad in the undressed skins of some animal, apparently the deer, and fitted nearly to the shape, reaching, however, but little below the elbow, where the linen was seen again in its brilliant whiteness, and opposed itself to his dark-toned skin, like a picture of the Italian school, where white is rejected in the carnation, and employed only where the object really is white. Lord Mowbray was struck with it; for it brought back to his mind, scenes, where every common beggar in the streets looks like a figure stepped out from one of the impressive and deep-coloured works of Sebastian del Piombo or Guercino.

Corrie Lovel, besides this body covering, wore a large wrapping cloak, somewhat resembling the Spanish in its fashion, hanging from his shoulders, apparently to be closed or thrown

back, as occasion required; its texture showed the service it had done; and, as he threw it from him when descending from his vehicle to make obeisance to the party, the large clasp that attached it caught General Montgomery's eye, and he exclaimed—"Well, Corrie, I see that the token of times past is still in existence, and I hope you need never be driven to seek its value by its weight."

"It must go hard with Corrie Lovel, honoured General, before he parts with what he values next to life itself."

"Why man, you won it, and may wear it proudly; but had you followed the career it opened to you at the time, you had been better off now."

The facts connected with the clasp in question were associated with a circumstance already alluded to by General Montgomery, after the eventful escape of Corrie from a halter. He had devoted himself for some time to the service of his benefactor, under an impression that, in that scene of danger, opportunity might be

afforded to render back the debt he had incurred. With this impression, he solicited the General, then a young aid-de-camp, to remain with him as one of his attendants, and followed him to the field on all occasions. In a particular instance, he was eminently successful:—they had been surprised by a recruiting party, and nearly overwhelmed by superior numbers; the General's horse was wounded, and, to save him, Corrie had given up his own, and engaged hand to hand with an officer of the American troops, whom he overcame, and the cloak and clasp which he now wore had been the spoils of his fallen enemy. The daring and intrepidity he displayed on this and other occasions were so great, that a very favourable idea began to be entertained of him, and his patron would have found little difficulty in promoting his interests as a soldier; but no inducement beyond gratitude could ever prevail on Corrie to continue in the service; and when the General returned, on the conclusion of the war, to England, his attendant quitted him, but he remained ever

after, as circumstances proved, gratefully alive to the remembrance of what he owed his benefactor.

Corrie Lovel now stood on his feet before the party. "How are you?" said General Montgomery; "I am sorry to see you not quite so active as when our acquaintance first began."

"Ay, honoured Sir, youth cannot be staid, and I know not that I would go back for mine, were it in my power to do so."

"There is hardly any thing that I know which is worth the trouble of going back for," said Lord Mowbray to Lady Emily, "not even youth; but if it would always last as it is, it would be pleasant enough."

"Oh, yes," she replied, gaily, "I am so very happy, I desire no change; I do not conceive how I could be happier than at the present moment, only for poor Rose."

"*You* are very young, indeed," was Lord Mowbray's reply, looking at her doubtingly, as if he knew not whether she spoke really in the innocence of her heart. If he had looked at her again, as she turned with the simplicity of

youthful enthusiasm to listen while Corrie Lovel continued speaking to the General, Lord Mowbray would have acquitted her of all affectation; but her sister had spoken from the window above, and he was engaged in replying to her; for, spite of his better judgment, Lady Frances never addressed him without fascinating his attention.

General Montgomery continued talking to Lovel, and at length said, "I have a question or two to put to you, Corrie, which you must answer on your allegiance."

"Your servant is ready to answer," was the prompt reply: and it would have been difficult for the keenest cross-questioner in a court of justice to have discovered, in the features of the party addressed, the slightest symptom of anxiety at this approaching examination, or the smallest variation in the fixed gaze which he turned on the General, while he awaited his interrogatories."

The General proceeded. "Do you hold yourself responsible, Corrie, for all the people in your company? are they all honest?" Corrie

started at the word honest, and paused; then said, "I will be responsible, General, that none of mine shall ever harm or intrude upon what is yours. But, honoured Sir, wrong me not by half words and doubts, for I owe you everlasting gratitude; if you have suffered loss or cross from any of my people, tell me," (and Corrie Lovel raised his hand, and his features bespoke all the vehemence of indignation;) "for redress you shall have, and vengeance shall fall on the guilty."

"My good Lovel, I do not doubt *you*, and I may wrong those about you; but circumstances have occurred, and my own servants are too trusty and too attached, I am willing to believe, for me to suspect them, to render inquiry necessary. I speak to you without attaching, for an instant, any suspicion to yourself, because I know you well; but in the best ordered societies rogues sometimes will gain admittance, and it may be—here, step aside that I may speak to you apart:" (and Corrie followed General Montgomery as he moved towards the end of the flight of steps,)—"it may be some of your

followers are to blame." They continued talking for some time alone; and Emily, meanwhile, with Colonel Pennington, and Miss Macalpine, were amused with the little Lushee's vivacity, who had always a ready answer to their questions.

At length Lady Emily, who had conquered the alarm she had felt on first seeing Corrie Lovel, held out her hand to Lushee, and said, "Come, tell my fortune, Lushee. I promised, some days ago, that you should do so:" alluding to her meeting them in her morning's walk with Rose.

Lushee sprang forward, but not before she had directed her quick glance towards her grandfather, who still remained in conversation with the General; and at the same time, in a sharp, shrill voice, which made Colonel Pennington start, as if he recognized in it something familiar to his ear, she uttered the following words:—"Ick—dwi—try—shtar;" and spreading open the fingers of both her hands, seemed waiting for his answer. Corrie answered the youthful sibyl in the same unintelligible gibberish, in an under voice.

Before Lushee approached, however, to perform her task of palmistry, she first wiped her hand on her shabby garments, then held it out to take the fair hand of Lady Emily; but her arm, dark as it was, might have disputed the superiority; for in hands, as in countenances, colour is the least part of beauty, and the long slender fingers and acorn-shaped nails of Lushee's tiny hand, rendered it beautiful of its kind; nor was she, it may be presumed, wholly unconscious of this charm.

“Now, lady,” said she, “let me see the lines on that pretty palm at leisure; do not be in such haste as the last time, for I have a deal to say, lady; but,” (speaking to Lord Mowbray, who had turned from Lady Frances to observe what was passing,) “if you please, young gentleman, keep away—for all things are not for your hearing, you know. There, now, lady love, I see that by this line which crosses that one, you will have a journey, and very soon; it will give you much pain, but some pleasure too, for here is the line of life sweetly interwoven with a mazy thread of blue veins; they

are the pleasures and fountains of life which give joy and peace. Do you take me, sweet lady? Now, be heedful, and mark Lushee's words, and do not look about you, nor at the young lord there: for though, true, he be so tall, so handsome, so courtly, you must not let your fancy wander there. He 'll but deceive thee, and leave thee to tears and sorrow," continued the little prophetess, in a half-whisper to Emily, who began to be evidently distressed. "He has won many hearts, and all as easily as Lushee gathers nuts, and has cracked them as easily too:" (here her penetrating gaze was directed full on the young lord.) "Now, look, lady, please to look in my face, and tell me if Lushee has not said a true word; hast not set thy fancy on one who has not set his fancy on thee? Isn't it as Lushee tells thee?"

"No, indeed," said Lady Emily, very innocently; "I have set my heart on nobody yet."

"Hast not?" said Lushee, quite put out in her story by this simple answer, which she had wit enough to know must be true, by the seal of sincerity which it bore: when pausing again,

she took up another thread of her story. "Thou needest be very watchful, not only for thyself but others; there are those anigh thee would work thee harm! Look to thyself, sweet lady! and, above all, look to those thou lovest most, for danger is hovering round them; and yon bird which I see in mid-air, carries a sword and digs graves for the unburied dead! Thou lookest pale and tremblest! why dost thou?" and the penetrating glance which the girl gave her, combined with her words of fearful import, caused Lady Emily to shudder involuntarily as she retreated from Lushee.

"Nay! yet stop awhile, lady! There are three things I must warn thee against:—love, poverty, and stratagem!"

"The first two things," answered Lady Emily, "I know nothing about; and the latter reminds me, Lushee, to leave you to exercise your eloquence and your art upon others!"

"How, Reyena! how? Lushee has no stratagems; she does not deceive thee! no, no! but dost not *thou* deceive Lushee? Thy heart, is it really fixed on no one yet?"

Lushee went on : “ But thou’lt be a sorrowful man yet ! a sinful one thou art. Think upon the gardens of Sorento ; think upon the caves on its shores ! ”

Lord Mowbray, roused for a moment to an eagerness he had never before displayed to those by whom he was surrounded, here uttered a sudden exclamation, and seized the girl’s hand, while he looked at her as though he would have dived into her very soul ; but Lushee returned his gaze, and her eyes assumed a fiery sparkling brightness as she continued :—
“ If the stars tell me these things, why, noble Lord, question my knowledge and my power as thou didst but now, and turnedst me to derision ? Thou knowest that I have uttered words that are like daggers to thy heart ! ”

Lord Mowbray, though evidently startled by what had fallen from the gipsy, made an effort to be calm.

“ In the multiplicity of nonsense the girl talks, it is no marvel that she stumbles accidentally on what gives pain or pleasure ! ” said he as he turned to Lady Emily ; and then seemed

to relapse into his usual *nonchalance* of manner, as he added, "but it matters not, you may talk, child!"

Lushee laughed: "I believe I have talked more than enough already; and will not add to my words, save to remind thee, Lord, that, though the eagle's nest be high, the winds of heaven are higher still, and may hurl it low; and to warn thee, that thou lingerest not here! Away, noble Lord! away! loiter not in indolence! Blush, since poor Lushee can reprove thy inactivity."

"To tell me of my indolence and inactivity requires no conjuror," replied Lord Mowbray, with a forced smile; "here—here is silver for you!" and he walked away, nearer to the window where Lady Frances sat. "I have been paying a great deal of money, Lady Frances; and what do you think it is for? to be told that 'I pass my life in doing nothing!'"

Lushee had followed Lord Mowbray, and was beginning to speak: "Get along! go, go!" said he angrily, "and learn your trade better!"

“Thou art no judge how well I know my trade, proud Lord! but some day or other perhaps thou mayest remember Lushee’s words; there are many ways of deceiving—thou’lt learn that to thy cost.”

“Away with you, child!” cried Lord Mowbray peevishly, as he threw her another crown; “begone.”

“She is an amusing little black-eyed thing,” said Colonel Pennington; “it is quite pitiable to see such a child in the ways of destruction.”

“Puir bit lassie!” said Miss Macalpine, “it makes me wae to see sic an a bonnie bairn sae ill guided; she’ll no’ be aweel doing; I fear me, you——”

“Guided!” repeated Lord Mowbray, who misunderstood her Scotch dialect: “I should never have imagined she was guided at all.”

General Montgomery now approached the group; and Lushee Lovell ran to her grandfather, and appeared to be whispering in his ear an account of her proceedings with Lady

Emily, and her warning to Lord Mowbray. The old man broke off from her, saying with an air of command, "Tshib, Tshib!" and, approaching within a respectful distance, seemed to wish to speak again with the General.

"Well, have you any thing more to say?" asked General Montgomery, as he observed him still lingering ere he departed!—"what is it?"

"Honoured Sir! in the press of other matters, I had forgotten a boon I would fain ask: there are certain sheep of your's have died in the western pasture, there; and your people know not what to make of them. Eat them they will not, and to bury them they are afraid, for the dogs will harrow them up again. Give them, General, if it please you, to Corrie, they 'll serve him and his people for a feast. I might have taken them, or have bought them for the carrying them away, but Corrie knows his duty too well to touch aught of your's save with especial leave; not a bit of wool would be disturbed from off their backs, but with

your consent, honoured General, by me or mine."

Corrie Lovel waited for his answer, while General Montgomery looked around with astonishment.—“Why, Lovel, the sheep, if dead, as you say, are your’s; and I shall thank you, as my people will too, for their removal; but in truth we ourselves are fearful in such cases how to dispose of them, lest their disease should spread. But are you in earnest, man? You will not eat of them, surely, unless you lack other food indeed, and then——”

“We think not that which God kills is unclean,” replied Lovel, “and we love the flesh that bleeds not by the knife.” A feeling of horror appeared to pervade the whole party as Corrie Lovel urged his request; and General Montgomery, putting a piece of gold into his hand as he ascended the steps, recommended him to provide a festival for his people with it, rather than from that which he proposed.

Lady Emily, as she reentered the hall, felt her spirits depressed; and though her natural good sense rejected the idea of attaching im-

portance to any mysterious words that had fallen from Lushee, yet their import left an uncomfortable impression on her mind, and she wished more than once that she had remained with Frances in the library. The idea of Rose, and the misery of her family, again recurred to her; and she determined to visit their cottage, though with faint hopes of finding its inmates more at peace than she had left them.

With this intention, instead of following the party back to the library, Emily equipped herself for her walk; and hastening through the garden, and across the chase, soon reached the objects of her anxiety. Her worst fears were but confirmed by what she learnt from the Delvins; Rose was not at home; but her wretched parents represented her as remaining still the same unmoved and hard creature that she had shown herself since the first of this miserable affair; and the old couple assured Lady Emily that it required their utmost forbearance, and the strongest recollection that she was their child, to withhold them from turning her into the street.

Their agony of tears, when speaking of the

rebellious and ungrateful Rose, was more than Emily could bear; and taking the old woman's hand and pressing it kindly, she rushed from their cottage little less agitated than themselves. "Tell Rose," she said as she left them,— "tell Rose, I desire her to come to me at the hall to-morrow morning at ten o'clock: I must see her."

With a slow and pensive step, and a heavy heart, Lady Emily trod her way home. For the heart of Emily was sensibly alive to the joys or the sorrows of humanity; the tenderness of her nature, unseared and uncontaminated by the world, led her readily to participate in the weal, or to sympathise in the woe of her fellow creatures; and she could become the ministering angel, or the blithe companion, as occasion demanded:—ever prompt to dispense comfort or promote happiness in others, herself the happiest, in proportion as she was the means of diffusing contentment around her.

As she ascended the terrace-steps, she observed General Montgomery in close conversation with Mr. Aldget; and her own anxiety

led her to conclude they were occupied about the release of young Philips from prison. Her uncle's agents had left the Hall already two days, and their business had been completed; what, therefore, had brought Mr. Aldget back? and the subject of their conversation was one of interest, by the earnestness of their manner.

While doubtful whether to approach, the General perceived her at a distance; and calling to her in his fondest tone, he said, "Emily, dearest Emily, come hither; I have something to tell you which will give you pleasure." Lady Emily bounded forward as he spoke, and her heart leapt with as quick a motion almost, as her steps flew towards him.

"What! dearest uncle! what? Oh, tell me."

"Why, dearest, Mr. Carlton has caused bail to be put in for Ambrose Philips, and he is liberated. Mr. Aldget saw him set at liberty early this morning; and Mr. Carlton, he assures us, will take no farther notice of the matter, and will not appear against him. There, Emily, are you not happy?"

“ Yes, dearest uncle,” flinging herself into his arms and kissing his cheek. “ Oh! yes, I am truly happy—now all will be well, and Rose must marry directly. I will go—”

“ Stop! dear Emily; surely you will inquire for Mr. Carlton, who has behaved so liberally, so nobly, on this occasion?”

“ Oh, surely,” replied Lady Emily, “ I feel so very grateful to Mr. Carlton for what he has done. I hope, Mr. Aldget, that Mr. Carlton does not continue in any danger, or to suffer much.”

“ I thank you, my Lady; I trust I may say that he is out of danger, but he is still suffering from this sad affair; and my friend Drench, who has attended him, says it will be a long time before he is quite himself—that he must take great care; indeed, Lady Emily, it is a noble instance of greatness of mind, his releasing that fellow; for, as I sat by his bedside, receiving his orders to that effect, I saw what pain he suffered; and Surgeon Drench came in at the moment, and said, ‘ You must not exert yourself, or I cannot answer for the consequence, Mr. Carlton;’—and

Mr. Carlton was all in an agitation, Lady Emily, and said to me, ‘Mr. Aldget,’ no! he called me Aldget—‘Aldget,’ says he, ‘this poor fellow must not remain in prison; and if any difficulties occur, remember you have my orders to offer bail to any amount.’ Could there be more generosity, ma’am, than this?” continued the loquacious attorney: but Lady Emily listened to his harangue with impatience, for her thoughts were elsewhere, and her opinion of the Honourable Mr. Carlton’s motives, perhaps, a little at variance with the impression which his humble servant and lawyer intended to convey.

Meanwhile, she was endeavouring to retreat from the subject, and to avoid all reply to it, when General Montgomery said, “Well, Emily, you are very happy, I see, at this information: where are you going now?” Emily stopped, and was hesitating. “Oh! I know where you would go, dearest; but you must not over-exert and fatigue yourself. I will send word to the Delvins. You already look pale and harassed, and remember, to-morrow is the ball, and I cannot

have you look ill at the good Fitzhammond's festival. Go to your room, dearest, and keep quiet. Good news spreads fast, and the Delvins will hear of Ambrose's release—doubtless, before you could reach their cottage: to be sure, he will go thither himself the first thing; and at such a moment you would only be in the way.'

Lady Emily was obliged to yield a reluctant consent to her uncle's wishes; when, kissing his extended hand, and curtseying to Mr. Aldget, she withdrew.

Although Emily's wishes, had they been uncontrolled, would have led her to seek the Delvins in their cottage, and to have been the first to communicate the happy tidings, she felt a joy in the assurance that the event would not fail to reach them, and that it must be productive of the happiest consequences. Already in idea she saw Rose and Ambrose, the mutual pride of their parents reconciled and united; and she beheld them established in their neat and comfortable cottage, the pattern of their native village, industrious and prosperous; and she pleased herself with the thought, that on

the morrow, when Rose hastened to her with the news, she should accompany her back to congratulate the good old Delvin and his wife, on this happy termination of all their sorrow. Alas! the youthful heart looks not beyond the present moment, and the felicity it expects is eagerly and too securely called its own. Lady Emily little knew what a sad reverse to her hopes the morrow would produce!

The first use Ambrose made of his liberty, as soon as he could steal away from his father, whose anger against Rose, whatever displeasure he felt himself against her, he could not bear to witness in another, was to fly to her dwelling to obtain an explanation of her conduct, which, he doubted not, would be as satisfactory and as efficacious in allaying his father's wrath, as in dispelling his own suspicions. His liberation from prison, although owing it to Mr. Carlton, detracted from its value; his ardent and honest wish to account to Rose for the violence of his conduct on the morning of their last unfortunate meeting, although indeed the circumstances at-

tendant upon it fully justified him—all flushed his heart with joy and anxiety.

The sun was shining unobscured by a cloud, the birds singing from every flowery spray, and the fresh herbage springing from every clod, beautified the earth. It requires refinement to speak of these things, but none to feel them: they are given by God to all his creatures alike, for their delight and their advantage; and many a gentle heart resides under a rustic garb, which does enjoy and is grateful for them, and such was that of Ambrose.

As he stepped along Love-lane, the well-known resort of all village lovers, he came suddenly up to her whom he was seeking; she was walking slowly, with her eyes upon the ground, and sweeping the earth with a bunch of may-flowers she held in one hand.

“Rose! dear Rose! do you not know me? I am Ambrose, your own Ambrose.”

“Bless me, why who’d have thought to have seen you here? I thought you’d been in gaol.”

“Well, Rose, that’s not over and above kind,

methinks, to remind a man of his misfortunes; and the more's the cruelty of it, when you consider how I got there. Why, Rose! are ye not glad to see me? if that's the case, I wish with all my heart I was back there again."

"Why really, Mr. Philips, you took me so by surprise, I don't know what to say!"

"Mr. Philips! why Rose," and he looked in her face, "are you *my* Rose? now don't call me *Mister*! I had rather ye knocked my head with a stone, that I would! I did not think, not I, as how you could treat a poor lad so! and one to whom you are betrothed!"

"Why, I wonder," returned the heartless girl, "what you could expect, after the ungentle manner in which you behaved yourself to a gentleman with whom I was walking."

"He a gentleman! a pretty gentleman, truly! why, I wonder, Rose, to hear you talk so! I never had thought to have seen the day! never. I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself; and if you comes to that, Miss Rose, why what

business had you to be walking with him, or any man?"

"And pray, Mr. Philips, what's your business who I walk with? I suppose I may walk with who I choose, and talk too, and hold *flirtations* too, as my mother calls it, if I choose; and no obligation neither to ask your leave that I know of!"

"Why, Rose, you quite astound me! as a body may say; why isn't you and I as good as wedded man and wife? haven't we exchanged tokens? broke our bit of silver together? and many's the time, in this sweet lane, have we not swore to be true till death! and haven't our fathers and yourn good mother blessed us? and can ye now say I have no right to know what made you keep company with that fine Squire?"

"You have no right, Mr. Philips, but what I choose to give you; and I don't know, after what has happened, that I shall choose to see you never no more!"

"Not me! not see me never no more! Well

now, Rose, you have done for it! Oh! father! father!" clenching his two hands and striking his breast: "you were right then, after all! she is a worthless one! and my heart is all turned to stone. Rose, give me your hand?" (she suffered him to take it.) "A short time ago, do ye see, I shouldn't have given up this hand to the King on his throne! and that I wouldn't, but for why? Why, because I thought you had given it to me with a true heart and an honest will; but now—now that I know you, rotten at the core, like bad fruit with a fair outside, I wouldn't take it, no! not if you were Queen, and courted me!" and he flung her hand from him.

Rose affected to laugh, and sang as she turned away, "Oh, ho! Mr. Jackanapes:—

' But I'll make as light of he
As he made of me;
And I'll be his love no longer,
So farewell he.' "

"One word more, Rose!" and his voice trembled as he spoke: "when you come to a bad

end, as the end of such as you will be!—bethink thee then of him who would have cherished and loved thee in youth and age; and with whom thou couldst have lived in respectable wedlock: and then look to thy state—despised and trodden down! Oh Rose, even now, I almost weep for thee! Go! go thy ways, unhappy, wicked Rose!”

Here they were startled by the sound of music, and a small party of soldiers were seen advancing: the little spruce drummer marched fiercely before the serjeant and his men; while the merry fife sounded its light shrill voice to make men think that war is a gay pageant, and foolish maidens conceive that it is a pleasant pastime to follow a soldier's fortunes. The recruiting serjeant and his party—for it was indeed no less—now actually crossed the foot of the lane where Ambrose had been left alone by his fickle mistress; and it is no shame to his manhood to declare, that he had wept out his sorrow in an agony of bitter tears. These gay sounds, the sight of the brilliant regimentals, the clamour of the village-throng hurraing in

thoughtless, ignorant admiration, awoke a sudden sentiment, hitherto unknown, in the breast of the forsaken Ambrose.

“Dang it,” he said, “I have been insulted, braved by a man who’s above me in life, and below me in heart; I have been put in prison by him”—and he ground his teeth together—“for defending one, who—ay, that’s the worst on’t,—a worthless, wanton jade, whom I did so love—whom I do so love—Oh! oh!” and he burst afresh out into loud sobbing.—“No,—I’ll go for a soldier, and serve my king and country; and if a bullet goes through my heart, so much the better: for Rose, yes Rose, has broken it. But I’ll be a man—yes, I’ll be a man; so there’s an end on’t:” and away he went, swinging his arms and striding along till he reached the Wellington public-house, where he found the serjeant and his recruiting-party enjoying a cool tankard with a number of idle clowns standing with open mouths around, listening to the insidious speeches of the man of war.

“Come, my brave boys!” he cried; “come

and see a little of life! don't stay here, tied to your mammy's apron-strings; come and fight for your sovereign, and see the world; it's a pity such fine fellows as you should be stooping all day over a plough or a spade; better list with me. See here's this youngster," (pointing to the drummer,) "he's as jolly a little dog as ever handled a drumstick, and in time will do brave service; why, he's as happy a little fellow as is in the land, and that's saying a good deal. Jim's a glorious pickle—a'n't you, Jim; and you can take off your ale with the best of us."

One or two of the women who had been standing gazing around, now pulled away their young boys; and, lifting their eyes to heaven, devoutly prayed, that if such alone were a soldier's life, her precious child might never become one: but the younger and more thoughtless members of the community had different wishes and ideas; and when the serjeant called to one of his men to give them a song, a larger circle again collected round the porch-door of the public-house.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

A Soldier's life 's a jolly thing :
 He serves his country, serves his king ;
 And when he 's fought on foreign strand,
 Again he comes to British land,
 With money in his pockets, boys.
 Oh, money gives us many joys :
 Good ale, good cheer, and what not, boys,
 A draught and pipe that never cloys.
 Oh, then we rant, and then we sing,
 Britannia rule, God bless the King !
 With my fal, la, la, brave boys !

There 's money chinking in my purse,
 You may go farther and fare worse :
 A brimming tankard foaming o'er ;
 Drain it, my lads, and ask for more.
 Here 's colours ! come, my hearties, say,
 Will you not wear them ? yea, or nay ?
 I know your hearts, how brave they be :
 I drink to thee, come drink to me.
 Oh ! thus we'll rant, and thus we'll sing,
 Britannia rule, God save the King !
 With my fal, la, la, brave boys !

A Soldier's life's the life for me ;
 Try it and see how gay we be :
 Not a care to vex or teaze us,
 And no wife to come and seize us.

When with our gay comrades drinking,
We are spared the pains of thinking
What may be our hap to-morrow,
Since to-day we're free from sorrow.
Come, brave fellows, join our crew!
Will you, my hearty? you, or you?
With my fal, la, la, brave boys!

“ I will !” said Ambrose, half-drunk with ale,
and wholly stupified with sorrow.

“ What ! Ambrose Philips leave Rose ?” cried
many voices.

“ Silence, I say ! or I will silence you after
another sort ! am I to be questioned by such
as you ?”

“ What !” said one old man with white hair,
and in a tremulous voice, leaning on a stick,
“ Ambrose leave his old feather ?”

“ Father !” repeated Ambrose, with an ago-
nized look ; and staggering to his feet he seemed
about to depart, when the serjeant tipped the
wink to one of his men, who dashed a glass of
spirits into the tankard he handed to him.

“ Come, my brave fellow ! you will not part
without a farewell cup, at least.” And now fol-

lowed story upon story, song upon song, till Ambrose, fired at the confused images of pleasure that the serjeant and his men represented on one hand, and those of pain and disgrace which overwhelmed him on the other, held out his hand to the former, who, putting a guinea into it, which Ambrose unconsciously grasped, declared him enlisted; and the poor victim of disappointed love and intoxication was marched off, between two men of the party, to quarters. There, on the morrow, he awoke too late to reason and a sense of his folly; the most wretched wight that dazzling glory and a worthless woman had ever cozened to his own undoing.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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